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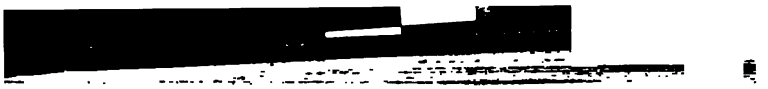
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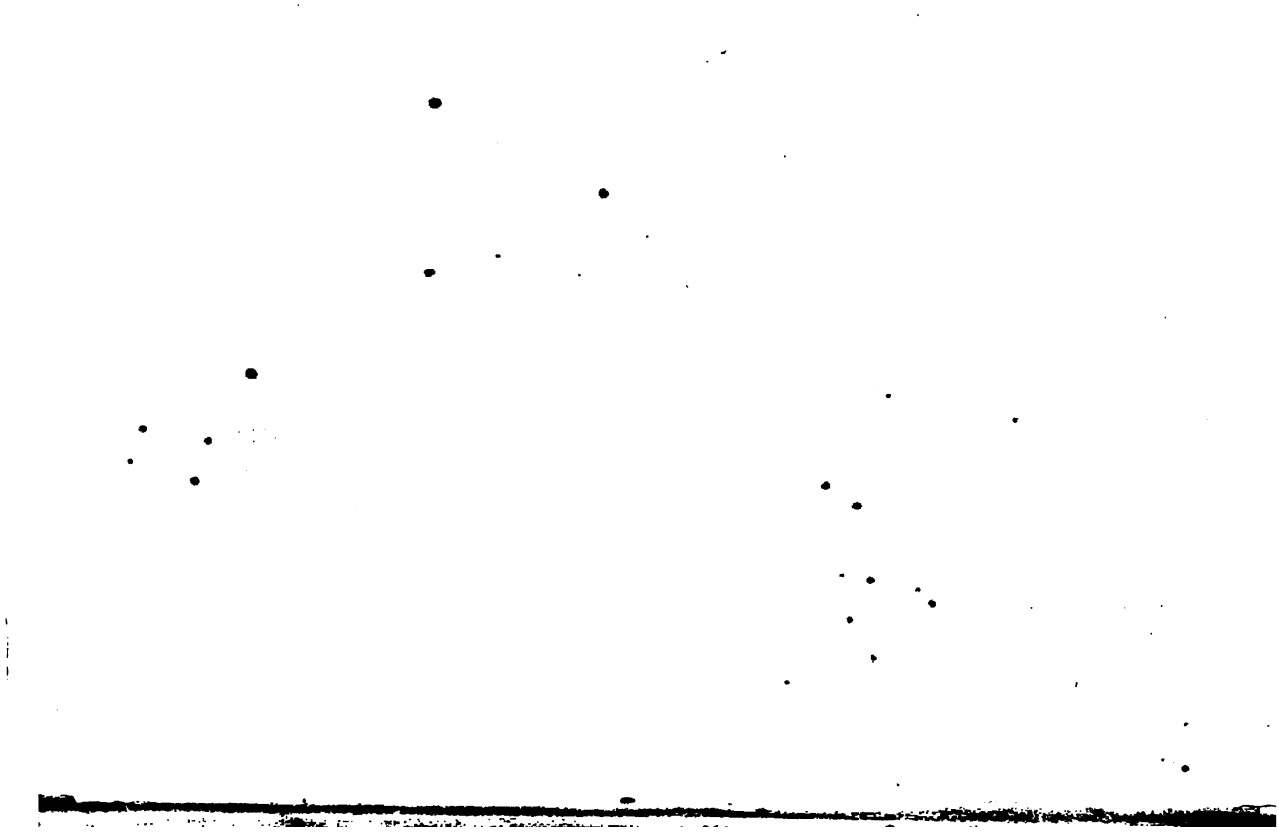


ESSAYS

ON BEAUTY

AND

ON TASTE.



ESSAY ON BEAUTY,

BY

FRANCIS, LORD JEFFREY;

AND

ESSAYS

ON THE

NATURE AND PRINCIPLES

OF

TASTE.

BY

ARCHIBALD ALISON, LL.D.,

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TO THE SECOND EDITION.

THE first edition of this work was published in the year 1790. After so long an interval, I should not have presumed again to present it to the public, if I had not been informed by my booksellers that some wish had lately been expressed for a second edition. In preparing it for the press, I have thought it my duty to add a few observations on the 'Origin of the Beauty and Sublimity of the Human Countenance and Form,' to complete the second Essay.

Of the general plan which I have sketched in the introduction, I lament to think that so little has been accomplished; and still more that the progress of years, and the increase of more serious duties, render me still less able to accomplish the original design I had formed.

Yet, if the public should express any wish to see these inquiries concluded, I shall be proud to feel myself under the obligation of attempting, at least, to obey it.

ARCHIBALD ALISON.

[DR. ALISON was born in 1757; entered Baliol College, Oxford, in 1775, and became Senior Master of the Episcopal Chapel, Canongate, Edinburgh. He died in 1839.—The article on Beauty by FRANCIS, LORD JEFFREY appeared in the *Edinburgh Review*, in a critical paper on 'Alison's Essays on Taste.'—A. M.]

'The beautiful and refined fancy and melodius style of Alison, render his Essays deserving of a conspicuous place in any well-chosen library.'—DIBDIN.

'These Essays are an excellent and highly pleasing work on taste.' —LOWNDES.

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ESSAY ON BEAUTY.

BY

LORD JEFFREY.

BEAUTY,—that property in objects by which they are recommended to the power or faculty of Taste—the reverse of ugliness—the primary or most general object of love or adoration.

These we confess, are rather explanations of the word than definitions of the thing it signifies; and can be of no value, even as explanations of the word, except only to those who understand, without explanation, all the other words they contain, for if the curious inquirer should proceed to ask, 'And what is the faculty or power of taste?' we do not see at present what other answer we could give, than that it was that of which beauty was the object; or by which we were enabled to discover and to relish what was beautiful. It is material, however, to observe, that if it could be made out, as some have alleged, that our perception of beauty was a simple sensation, like our perception of colour; and that taste was an original and distinct sense, like that of seeing or hearing; this would be truly the only definition that could be given, either of the sense or of its object—and all that we could do in investigating the nature of the latter, would be to digest and enumerate the circumstances under which it was found to present itself to its appropriate organ. All that we can say of colour, if we consider it very strictly, is, that it is that property in objects by which they are recommended to the faculty of sight; and the faculty of sight can scarcely be defined in any other way than as that by which we are enabled to discover the existence of colour. When we attempt to proceed farther, and say that green is the colour of grass, and red of roses or blood, it is plain that we do not in any respect explain the nature of those colours, but only give instances of their occurrence; and that one who had never seen them could learn nothing whatever from these pretended definitions. Complex ideas, on the other hand, and compound emotions, may be always defined, and explained to a certain extent by enumerating the parts of which they are made up, or resolving them into the elements of which they are composed: and we thus acquire, a substantial knowledge of their nature, and a practical power in their regulation or production.

It becomes of importance, therefore, in the very outset of this inquiry, to consider whether our sense of beauty be really a simple

sensation, like some of those we have enumerated, or a compound or derivative feeling, the sources or elements of which may be investigated and ascertained. If it be the former, we have then only to refer it to the peculiar sense or faculty of which it is the object, and to determine, by repeated observation, under what circumstances it occurs; but if it be the latter, we have to proceed, by a joint process of observation and reflection, to ascertain what are the primary feelings to which it may be referred; and by what peculiar modification of them it is produced and distinguished. We are not quite prepared, as yet, to exhaust the whole of this important discussion, to which we shall be obliged to return in the sequel of our inquiry; but it is necessary, in order to explain and to set forth, in their natural order, the difficulties with which the subject is surrounded, to state here, in a very few words, one or two of the most obvious and, as we think, decisive objections against the notion of beauty being a simple sensation, or the object of a separate and peculiar faculty.

The first, and perhaps the most considerable, is the want of agreement as to the presence and existence of beauty in particular objects, among men whose organization is perfect, and who are plainly possessed of the faculty, whatever it may be, by which beauty is discerned. Now, no such thing happens, we imagine, or can be conceived to imagine, in the case of any other simple sensation, or the exercise of any other distinct faculty. Where one man sees light, all men who have eyes, see light also: all men allow grass to be green; and sugar to be sweet; and ice to be cold; and the unavoidable inference from any apparent disagreement in such matters necessarily is, that the party is insane, or entirely destitute of the sense or organ concerned in the perception. With regard to beauty, however, it is obvious, at first sight, that the case is quite different; one man sees it perpetually, where to another it is quite invisible, or even where its reverse seems to be conspicuous; nor is this owing to the insensibility of either of the parties, for the same contrarity exists where both are keenly alive to the influences of the beauty they respectively discern. A Chinese or African lover would probably see nothing at all attractive in a belle of London or Paris, and undoubtedly, an *elegans for marum* spectator, from either of these cities, would discover nothing but deformity in the Venus of the Hottentots. A little distance in time produces the same effects as distance in place; the gardens, the furniture, the dress, which appeared beautiful in the eyes of our grandfathers, are odious and ridiculous in ours. Nay, the difference of rank, education, or employments give rise to the same diversity of sensation. The little shopkeeper sees a beauty in his roadside box, and in the staring tile roof, wooden lions, and clipped boxwood, which strike horror into the soul of the student of the picturesque; while he is transported in surveying the fragments of ancient sculpture, which are nothing but ugly masses of

mouldering stone in the judgment of the admirer of neatness. It is needless, however, to multiply instances, since the fact admits of no contradiction but how can we believe that beauty is the object of a peculiar sense or faculty, when persons undoubtedly possessed of the faculty, and even in an eminent degree, can discover nothing of it in objects where it is distinctly felt and perceived by others with the same use of the faculty?

This one consideration, we confess, appears to us conclusive against the supposition of beauty being a real property of objects, addressing itself to the power of taste as a separate sense or faculty, and seems to point irresistibly to the conclusion that our sense of it is the result of more elementary feelings, into which it may be analyzed or resolved. A second objection, however, if possible of still greater force, is suggested, by considering the prodigious and almost infinite variety of things to which this property of beauty is ascribed, and the impossibility of imagining any one inherent quality which can belong to them all, and yet, at the same time, possess so much unity as to be the peculiar object of a separate sense or faculty. All simple qualities that are perceived in one object, are immediately recognized to be the same, when they are again perceived in another; and the objects in which they are thus perceived, are at once felt so far to resemble each other, and to partake of the same nature. Thus, snow is seen to be white, and chalk is seen to be white; but this is no sooner seen, than the two substances, however unlike in other respects, are felt at once to have this quality in common, and to resemble each other in all that relates to the quality of colour, and the sense of seeing. Now, is this felt, or could it be intelligibly asserted with regard to the quality of beauty? Take even a limited and specific sort of beauty: for instance, the beauty of form: the form of a fine tree is beautiful, and the form of a fine woman, and the form of a column, and a vase, and a chandelier. Yet how can it be said that the form of a woman has anything in common with that of a tree or a temple? or to which of the senses by which forms are distinguished, does it appear they have any resemblance or affinity? The matter, however, becomes still more inextricable when we recollect that beauty does not belong merely to forms or colours, but to sounds, and perhaps to the objects of other senses; nay, that in all languages and in all nations, it is not supposed to reside exclusively in material objects, but to belong also to sentiments and ideas, and intellectual and moral existences. Not only is a tree beautiful, as well as a palace or a waterfall; but a poem is beautiful, and a theorem in mathematics, and a contrivance in mechanics. But if things intellectual and totally segregated from matter may thus possess beauty, how can it possibly be a quality of material objects, or what sense or faculty can that be, whose proper office it is to intimate to us the existence of some property which is

common to a flower and a demonstration, a valley and an eloquent discourse?

The only answer which occurs to this, is plainly enough a bad one; but the statement of it, and of its insufficiency, will serve better, perhaps, than any thing else, to develope the actual difficulties of the subject and the true state of the question with regard to them. It may be said, then, in answer to the questions we have suggested above, that all these objects, however various and dissimilar, agree at least in being agreeable, and that this agreeableness, which is the only quality they possess in common, may probably be the beauty which is ascribed to them all. Now to those who are accustomed to such discussions, it would be quite enough to reply, that though the agreeableness of such objects depend plainly enough upon their beauty, it by no means follows, but quite the contrary, that their beauty depends upon their agreeableness; the latter being the more comprehensive or generic term under which beauty must rank as one of the species. Its nature, therefore, is no more explained, nor is less absurdity substantially committed, by saying that things are beautiful, because they are agreeable, than if we were to give the same explanation of the sweetness of sugar; for no one, we suppose, will dispute, that though it be very true that sugar is agreeable because it is sweet, it would be manifestly preposterous to say that it was sweet because it was agreeable. For the benefit, however, of those who wish or require to be more regularly initiated in these mysteries, we beg leave to add a few observations.

In the first place, then, it seems evident, that agreeableness, in general, cannot be the same with beauty, because there are very many things in the highest degree agreeable, that can in no sense be called beautiful. Moderate heat, and savoury food, and rest, and exercise, are agreeable to the body; but none of these can be called beautiful; and many objects of a higher class, the love and esteem of others, and fame and a good conscience, and health, and riches, and wisdom, are all eminently agreeable, but not at all beautiful, according to my intelligible use of the word. It is quite absurd to say that beauty consists in agreeableness, with specifying in consequence of what it is agreeable,—or to hold that anything whatever is taught as to its nature, by merely classing it among our pleasurable emotions.

In the second place, however, we may remark, that among all the objects that are agreeable, whether they are also beautiful or not, scarcely any two are agreeable on account of the same qualities, or even suggest their agreeableness to the same faculty or organ. Most certainly there is no resemblance or affinity whatever between the qualities which make a peach agreeable to the palate, and a beautiful statue to the eye; which soothe us in an easy chair by the fire, or delight us in the philosophical discovery. The truth is, that agreeableness is not

properly a quality of any object whatever, but the effect or result of certain qualities, the nature of which we can generally define pretty exactly, or of which we know at least that they manifest themselves to some one particular sense or faculty, and no other ; and consequently it would be just as obviously ridiculous to suppose a faculty or organ, whose office it was to perceive agreeableness, as to suppose that agreeableness was a distinct quality that could thus be perceived.

The class of agreeable, thanks to the bounty of Providence, is exceedingly large. Certain things are agreeable to the palate, and others to the smell and the touch. Some again are agreeable to our faculty of imagination, or to our understanding, or to our moral feelings ; and none of all these we call beautiful ; but there are others which we do call beautiful ; and those we say are agreeable to our faculty of taste. But when we come to ask what is the faculty of taste, and what are the qualities which recommend them to that faculty? we find ourselves just where we were at the beginning of the discussion, and embarrassed with all the difficulties arising from the prodigious diversity of objects which seem to possess the qualities.

We know pretty well what is the faculty of seeing or hearing ; or, at least, we know that what is agreeable to one of those faculties, has no effect whatever on the other. We know that bright colours afford no delight to the ear, nor sweet tones to the eye ; and are therefore perfectly assured that the qualities which make the visible objects agreeable, cannot be the same with those which give pleasure to the ear ; but it is by the eye and by the ear that all material beauty is perceived ; and yet the beauty which discloses itself to these two separate senses, and plainly depends upon qualities which have no sort of affinity, is supposed to be one distinct quality, and to be perceived by a peculiar sense or faculty ! The perplexity becomes still greater when we think of the beauty of poems or theorems, and endeavour to imagine what qualities they can possess in common with the agreeable modifications of light or of sound.

It is in these considerations that the difficulty of the subject consists. The faculty of taste, plainly, is not a faculty like any of the external senses—the range of whose objects is limited and precise, as well as the qualities by which they are gratified or offended,—and beauty, accordingly, is discovered in an infinite variety of objects, among which it seems at first sight impossible to discover any other bond or connection. Yet, boundless as their diversity may appear, it is plain that they must resemble each other in something, and in something more definite and definable than merely in being agreeable ;—since they are all classed together, in every tongue and nation, under the common appellation of beautiful, and are felt indeed to produce emotions in the mind that have some sort of kindred or affinity. The words beauty and beautiful, in short, must mean something ; and are

universally felt to mean something much more definite than agreeableness or gratification in general; and while it is by no means easy to describe or define what that something is, the force and clearness of our perception of it is demonstrated by the readiness with which we determine, in any particular instance, whether the object of a given pleasurable emotion is or is not properly described as beauty.

What we have already said, we confess, appears to us conclusive against the idea of this beauty being any fixed or inherent property of the objects to which it is ascribed, or itself the object of any separate and independent faculty; and we will no longer conceal from the reader what we take to be the true solution of the difficulty. In our opinion, then, our sense of beauty depends entirely on our previous experience of similar pleasures or emotions, and consists in the suggestion of agreeable or interesting sensations with which we had formerly been made familiar by the direct and intelligible agency of our common sensibilities; and that vast variety of objects, to which we give the common name of beautiful, become entitled to that appellation, merely because they all possess the power of recalling or reflecting those sensations of which they have been the accompaniments, or with which they have been associated in our imagination by any other more casual bond of connection. According to this view of the matter, therefore, beauty is not an inherent property or quality of objects at all, but the result of the accidental relations in which they may stand to our experience of pleasures or emotions, and does not depend upon any particular configuration of parts, proportions, or colours, in external things, nor upon the unity, coherence, or simplicity of intellectual creations; but merely upon the associations which, in the case of every individual may enable these inherent, and otherwise indifferent qualities, to suggest or recal to the mind emotions of a pleasurable or interesting description. It follows, therefore, that no object is beautiful in itself, or could appear so, antecedent to our experience of direct pleasures or emotions; and that as an infinite variety of objects may thus reflect interesting ideas, so all of them may acquire the title of beautiful, although utterly diverse and disparate in their nature, and possessing nothing in common but this accidental power of reminding us of other emotions.

This theory, which, we believe, is now very generally adopted, though under many needless qualifications, shall be farther developed and illustrated in the sequel; but at present we shall only remark, that it serves at least to solve the great problem involved in the discussion, by rendering it easily conceivable how objects which have no inherent resemblance, nor, indeed, any one quality in common, should yet be united in one common relation, and consequently acquire one common epithet. Just as all the things that belonged to a beloved individual *may serve to remind us* of him, and thus to awake a kindred class of

emotions, though just as unlike each other as any of the objects that are classed under the general name of beautiful. His poetry, or his slippers,—his acts of bounty, or his saddlehorse,—may lead to the same chain of interesting remembrances, and thus agree in possessing a power of excitement, for the sources of which we should look in vain through all the variety of their physical or metaphysical qualities.

By the help of the same consideration, we get rid of all the mystery of a peculiar sense or faculty, imagined for the express purpose of perceiving beauty; and discover that the power of taste is nothing more than the habit of tracing those associations, by which almost all objects may be connected with interesting emotions. It is easy to understand that the recollection, that any sense of delight or emotion must produce a certain agreeable sensation, and that the objects which introduce these recollections should not appear altogether indifferent to us: nor is it very difficult to imagine, that recollections thus suggested by some real and present existence, should present themselves under a different aspect, and move the mind some what from those which arise spontaneously in the ordinary course of our reflections, and not thus grow out of a direct and peculiar impression.

The whole of this doctrine, however, we shall endeavour by and bye to establish upon more direct evidence; but having now explained, n a general way, both the difficulties of the subject, and our suggestion as to their true solution, it is proper that we should take a short ireview of the more considerable theories that have been proposed for the elucidation of this curious question; which is one of the most delicate, as well as the most popular in the science of metaphysics,—was one of the earliest which exercised the speculative ingenuity of philosophers,—and has at last, we think, been more successfully treated than any other of a similar description.

In most of these speculations, we shall find rather imperfect truth, than fundamental error; or, at all events, such errors only as arise naturally from that peculiar difficulty which we have already endeavoured to explain, as consisting in the prodigious multitude and diversity of the objects in which the common quality of beauty was to be accounted for. Those who have not been sufficiently aware of the difficulty have generally dogmatized from a small number of instances, and have rather given examples of the occurrence of beauty in some few classes of objects, than afforded any light as to that upon which it essentially depended in all; while those who felt its full force have very often found no other resource, than to represent beauty as consisting in properties so extremely vague and general (such, for example, as the power of exciting ideas of relation), as almost to elude our comprehension and, at the same time, of so abstract and metaphysical a description, as not to be very intelligibly stated, as the radicals of a strong, familiar, *and pleasurable* emotion. This last observation leads

us to make one remark upon the general character of these theories; and this is, that some of them seem necessary to imply the existence of a peculiar sense or faculty for the perception of beauty; as they resolve it into properties that are not in any way interesting or agreeable to any of our known faculties. Such are all those which make it consist in proportion,—or in variety, combined with regularity,—or in waving lines,—or in unity,—or in the perception of relations,—without explaining, or attempting to explain, how any of these things should affect us with any delight or emotion. Others, again, do not require the supposition of any such separate faculty; because in them the sense of beauty is considered as arising from other more simple and familiar emotions, which are in themselves and beyond dispute agreeable. Such are those which depend on the perception of utility, or of design, or fitness, or in tracing associations between its objects and the common joys or emotions of our nature. Which of these two classes of speculation, to one or the other of which, we believe, all theories of beauty may be reduced, is the most philosophical in itself, we imagine can admit of no question; and we hope in the sequel to leave it as little doubtful, which is to be considered as most consistent with the fact. In the meantime, we must give a short account of some of the theories themselves.

The most ancient of which it seems necessary to take any notice, is that which may be traced in the dialogues of Plato,—though we are very far from pretending that it is possible to give any intelligible or consistent account of its tenor. It should never be forgotten, however, that it is to this subtle ingenious spirit, that we owe the suggestion that it is mind alone that is beautiful; and that, in perceiving beauty, it only contemplates the shadow of its affections;—a doctrine which, however mystically unfolded in his writings, or however conbined with extravagant or absurd speculations, unquestionably carries in it the germ of all the truth that has since been revealed on the subject. By far the largest dissertation, however, that this great philosopher has left upon the nature of beauty, is to be found in the dialogue entitled 'Greater Hippias,' which is entirely devoted to that inquiry. We do not learn a great deal of the author's own opinion, indeed, from this performance; for it is one of the dialogues which have been termed Anatreptic or confuting, in which nothing is concluded in the affirmative, but a series of sophistical suggestions or hypothesis are successively exposed. The plan of it is to lead on Hippias, a shallow and confident sophist, to make a variety of dogmatical assertions as to the nature of beauty, and then to make him retract and abandon them upon the statement of some obvious objections. Socrates and he agree at first in the notable proposition, 'that beauty is that by which *all* beautiful things are beautiful;' and then, after a greater number *of suggestions, by far too* childish and absurd to be worthy of any

notice, such as, that the beautiful may peradventure be gold, or a fine woman, or a handsome mare, they at last get to some suppositions, which show that almost all the theories that have since been propounded on this interesting subject, had occurred thus early to the active and original mind of this keen and curious inquirer. Thus Socrates first suggests, that beauty may consist in the fitness or suitableness of any object to the place it occupies, and afterwards, more generally and directly, that it may consist in utility; a notion which is ultimately rejected, however, upon the subtle consideration that the useful is that which produces good, and that the producer and the product being necessarily different, it would follow, upon that supposition, that beauty could not be good, nor good beautiful. Finally, he suggests, that beauty may be the mere organic of the eye or the ear,—to which, after stating very slightly the objection, that it would be impossible to account upon this ground for the beauty of poetry or eloquence, he proceeds to rear up a more refined and elaborate reputation, upon such grounds as these :—If beauty be the proper name of that which is naturally agreeable to the sight and hearing, it is plain, that the objects to which it is ascribed must possess some common and distinguishable property, besides that of being agreeable, in consequence of which they are separated and set apart from objects that are agreeable to our other senses and faculties, and at the same time classed together under the common appellation of beautiful. Now we are not only quite unable to discover what this property is, but it is manifest that objects which make themselves known to the ear can have no property as such, in common with objects that make themselves known to the eye; it being impossible that an object which is beautiful by its colour can be beautiful from the same quality, with another which is beautiful by its sound. From all which it is inferred, that, as beauty is admitted to be something real, it cannot be merely what is agreeable to the organs of sight or hearing.

There is no practical wisdom, we admit, in those fine drawn speculations; nor any of that patient observation by which alone any sound view of such objects can ever be attained. There are also many marks of that singular incapacity to distinguish between what is absolutely puerile and silly, and what is plausible, at least, and ingenious, which may be reckoned among the characteristics of 'the divine philosopher,' and in some degree of all the philosophers of antiquity; but they show clearly enough the subtle and abstract character of Greek speculation, and prove at how early a period, and to how great an extent, the inherent difficulties of the subject were felt, and produced their appropriate effects.

There are some hints on these subjects in the works of Zenophon, and some scattered observations in those of Cicero, who was the first, I believe, *to observe, that* the sense of beauty is peculiar to man;—

but nothing else, we believe, in classical antiquity, which requires to be analyzed or explained. It appears that St. Augustin composed a large treatise on beauty; and it is to be lamented that the speculations of that acute and ardent genius on such a subject have been lost. We discover, from incidental notices in other parts of his writings, that he conceived the beauty of all objects to depend on their unity,—or on the perception of that principle or design which fixed the relations of their various parts, and presented them to the intellect or imagination as one harmonious whole. It would not be fair to deal very strictly with a theory with which we are so imperfectly acquainted: but it may be observed, that, while the author is so far in the right as to make beauty consist in a relation to mind, and not in any physical quality, he has taken far too narrow and circumscribed a view of the matter, and one which seems almost exclusively applicable to works of human art; it being plain enough, we think, that a beautiful landscape, or a beautiful horse, has no more unity, and no more traces of design, than one which is not beautiful.

We do not know what the schoolmen taught upon this subject during the dark ages; but the discussion does not seem to have been resumed for long after the revival of letters. The followers of Leibnitz were pleased to maintain, that beauty consisted in perfection; but what constituted perfection they did not attempt to define. M. Crouzas wrote a long essay, to show that beauty depended on these five elements—variety, unity, regularity, order, and proportion; and the Pere André, a still longer one to prove, that, admitting these to be the true foundations of beauty, it was still most important to consider, that the beauty which results from them is either essential, or natural, or artificial,—and that it may be greater or less, according as the characteristics of each of these classes are combined or set in opposition.

Among ourselves, we are not aware of any considerable publication on the subject till the appearance of Lord Shaftesbury's characteristics, in which a sort of rapturous Platonic doctrine is delivered as to the existence of a primitive and supreme good and beauty, and of a certain internal sense, by which both beauty and moral merit were distinguished. Addison published several ingenious papers in the *Spectator*, on the pleasures of the imagination, and was the first, we believe, who referred them to the specific sources of beauty, sublimity, and novelty. He did not enter much, however, into the metaphysical discussion of the nature of beauty itself; and the first philosophical treatise of note that appeared on the subject, may be said to have been the inquiry of Dr. Hucheson, first published, we believe, in 1725.

In this work, the notion of a peculiar internal sense, by which we are made sensible of the existence of beauty, is very boldly promulgated and maintained by many ingenious arguments. Yet nothing, we conceive, can be more extravagant than such a proposition; and

nothing but the radical faults of the other parts of the hypothesis could possibly have driven the learned author to its adoption. Even after the existence of this sixth sense was assumed, he felt that it was still necessary that he should explain what were the qualities by which it was gratified; and these, he was pleased to allege, were nothing but the combinations of variety with uniformity; all objects, as he has himself expressed it, which are equally uniform, being beautiful in proportion to their variety,—and all objects equally various being beautiful in proportion to their uniformity. Now, not to insist upon the obvious and radical objection that this is not true in fact, as to flowers, landscapes, or of anything but architecture, if it be true of that, it could not fail to strike the ingenious author that these qualities of uniformity and variety were not of themselves agreeable to any of our known senses or faculties, except when considered as symbols of utility or design, and therefore could not intelligibly account for the very lively emotions which we often experience from the perception of beauty, when the notion of design or utility was not at all suggested. He was constrained, therefore, either to abandon this view of the nature of beauty altogether, or to imagine a new sense or faculty, whose characteristic and description it should be to receive delight from the combinations of uniformity and variety, without any consideration of their being significant of things agreeable to our other faculties; and this being accomplished by the mere force of the assumption and the definition, there was no room for farther dispute in the matter.

Some of Hucheson's followers, such as Gerard and others, who were a little startled at the notion of a separate faculty, and yet wished to retain the doctrine of beauty depending on variety and uniformity, endeavoured, accordingly, to show these qualities were agreeable to the mind, and were recommended by considerations arising from its most familiar properties. Uniformity or simplicity, it is said, renders our conception of objects easy, and saves the mind from all fatigue and distraction in the consideration of them; whilst variety, if circumscribed and limited by an ultimate uniformity gives it a pleasing exercise and excitement, and keeps its energies in a state of pleasurable activity. Now this appears to us to be mere trifling, the varied and lively emotions which we receive from the perception of beauty, obviously have no sort of resemblance to the pleasure of moderate intellectual exertion; nor can anything be conceived more utterly dissimilar than the gratification we have in gazing on the form of a lovely woman, and the satisfaction we receive from working an easy problem in arithmetic or geometry. If a triangle is more beautiful than a regular polygon, as those authors maintain, merely because its figure is more easily comprehended, the number four should be more beautiful than the number three hundred and twenty-seven, and the form of a gibbet far more agreeable than that of a branching oak; the

radical error, in short, consists in fixing upon properties that are not interesting in themselves, and can never be conceived, therefore, to excite any emotion, as the fountain-spring of all our emotions of beauty: and it is an absurdity that must infallibly lead to others, whether these take the shape of a violent attempt to disguise the truly indifferent nature of the properties so selected, or of the bolder expedient of creating a peculiar faculty, to find them interesting.

The next remarkable theory was that proposed by Edmund Burke, in his treatise of the Sublime and Beautiful. But of this, in spite of the great name of the author, we cannot persuade ourselves that it is necessary to say much. His explanation is founded upon a species of materialism, not much to have been expected from the general character of his genius, or the strain of his other speculations, for it all resolves into this, that all objects appear beautiful which have the power of producing a peculiar relaxation of our nerves and fibres, and thus inducing a certain degree of bodily languor and sinking. Of all the suppositions that have been at any time hazarded to explain the phenomena of beauty, this, we think, is the most unfortunate and the most weakly supported. There is no philosophy in the doctrine, and the fundamental assumption is in every way contradicted by the most familiar experience. There is no relaxation of the fibres in the perception of beauty, and there is no pleasure in the relaxation of the fibres. If there were, it would follow, that a warm bath would be by far the most beautiful thing in the world, and that the brilliant lights, and bracing airs of a fine autumn morning, would be the very reverse of beautiful accordingly, though the treatise alluded to will always be valuable on account of the many fine and just remarks it contains. We are not aware that there is any accurate inquirer into the subject (with the exception, perhaps, of Mr. Price, in whose hands, however, the doctrine assumes a new character), by whom the fundamental principle of the theory has not been explicitly abandoned.

A yet more extravagant doctrine was soon afterwards inculcated, and in a tone of great authority, in a long article from the brilliant pen of Diderot, in the French Encyclopædia; and one which exemplifies, in a very striking manner, the nature of the difficulties with which the discussion is embarrassed. This ingenious person, perceiving at once that the beauty which we ascribe to a particular class of objects could not be referred to any peculiar and inherent quality in the objects themselves, but depended upon their power of exciting certain sentiments in our minds; and being, at the same time, at a loss to discover what common power could belong to so vast a variety of objects as pass under the general appellation of beautiful, or by what tie all the various emotions which are excited by the perception of beauty could be united, was at last driven, by his sense of the necessity of keeping his definition sufficiently wide and comprehensive, to hazard the strange

assertion, that all objects were beautiful which excite in us the idea of relation; that our sense of beauty consisted in tracing out the relations which the object possessing it might have to other objects, and that its beauty was in proportion to the number and clearness of the relations thus suggested and perceived. It is scarcely necessary, we presume, to expose by any arguments the manifest fallacy, or rather the palpable absurdity of such a theory as this. In the first place, we conceive it to be obvious, that all objects whatever have an infinite, and consequently an equal number of relations, and are equally likely to suggest them to those to whom they are presented; at all events, it is certain, that ugly and disagreeable objects have just as many relations as those that are agreeable, and ought, therefore, to be just as beautiful, if the sense of beauty consists in perception of relations. In the next place, it seems to be sufficiently certain from the experience and common feelings of all men that the perception of relations among objects is not in itself accompanied by any pleasure whatever, and in particular has no conceivable resemblance to the emotion we receive from the perception of beauty. When we perceive one ugly old woman sitting exactly opposite to two other ugly old women, and observe, at the same moment, that the first is as big as the other two taken together, we humbly conceive that this clear perception of the relations in which these three graces stand to each other, cannot well be mistaken for a sense of beauty, and that it does not in the least abate or interfere with our sense of their ugliness. Finally, we may observe, that the sense of beauty results instantaneously from the perception of the object; whereas the discovery of its relations to other objects must necessarily be a work of time and reflection; in the course of which the beauty of the object, so far from being created or brought into notice, must, in fact, be lost sight of and forgotten.

Another more plausible and ingenious theory was suggested by the Père Buffier, and afterwards adopted and illustrated with great talent in the discourses of Sir Joshua Reynolds. According to this doctrine, beauty consists, as Aristotle held virtue to do, in mediocrity, or conformity to that which was most usual. Thus a beautiful nose, to make use of Dr. Smith's very apt illustration of this doctrine is one that is neither very long nor very short, very straight nor very much bent; but of an ordinary form and proportion, compared with all the extremes; it is the form, in short, which nature seems to have aimed at in all cases, though she has more frequently deviated from it than hit it; but deviating from it in all directions, all her deviations come nearer to it than they ever do to each other. Thus the most beautiful in every species of creatures bears the greatest resemblance to the whole species, while monsters are so denominated because they bear the least; and thus the beautiful, though in one sense the rarest, as the exact medium is but seldom hit, is invariably the most common, because it is the central

point from which all the deviations are the least remote. This view of the matter is adopted by Sir Joshua in its full extent, and is even carried so far by this great artist, that he does not scruple to conclude, 'that if we were more used to deformity than beauty, deformity would then lose the idea that is now annexed to it, and take that of beauty; just as we approve and admire fashions in dress, for no other reason than that we are used to them.'

Now, not to dwell upon the very startling conclusion to which these principles must lead, viz., that things are beautiful in proportion as they are ordinary; and that it is merely their familiarity which constitutes their beauty we would observe, in the first place, that the whole theory seems to have been suggested by a consideration of animal forms, or perhaps of the human figure exclusively. In these forms, it is quite true that great and monstrous deviations from the usual proportions are extremely disagreeable. But this, we have no doubt, arises entirely from some idea of pain or disaster attached to their existence, or from their obvious unfitness for the functions they have to perform. In vegetable forms, accordingly, these irregularities excite no such disgust; it being, in fact, the great object in culture, in almost all the more beautiful kinds, to produce what may be called monstrosities; and in mineral substances, where the idea of suffering is still more completely excluded, it is notorious that, so far from the more ordinary configurations being thought the most beautiful, this epithet is scarcely ever employed but to denote some rare and unusual combination of veins, colours, or dimensions. As to landscapes, again, and almost all the works of art, without exception, the theory is plainly altogether incapable of application. In what sense, for example, can it be said that the beauty of natural scenery consists in mediocrity; or that those landscapes are the most beautiful that are the most common? Or what meaning can we attach to the proposition that the most beautiful building, or picture, or poem, is that which bears the nearest resemblance to all the individuals of its class, and is, upon the whole, the most ordinary and common?

To a doctrine which is liable to these obvious and radical objections, it is not perhaps necessary to make any other; but we must remark farther, first, that it necessarily supposes that the sense of beauty is, in all cases, preceded by such a large comparison between various individuals of the same species, as may enable us to ascertain that average or mean form in which beauty is supposed to consist; and consequently, that we could never discover any object to be beautiful antecedent to such a comparison; and, secondly, that, even if we were to allow that this theory afforded some explanation of the superior beauty of any one object, compared with others of the same *class*, it plainly furnishes no explanation whatever of the superior *beauty of one class of objects* compared with another. We may believe,

if we please, that one peacock is handsomer than another, because it approaches more nearly to the mean form of peacocks in general; but this reason will avail us nothing whatever in explaining why any peacock is handsomer than any pelican or penguin. We may say, without manifest absurdity, that the most beautiful pig is that which has least of the extreme qualities that sometimes occur in the tribe; but it would be palpably absurd to give this reason, or anything like it, for the superior beauty of the tribe of antelopes or spaniels.

The notion, in short, seems to have been hastily adopted by the ingenious persons who have maintained it, partly from the narrow ground of the disgust produced by monsters in the animal creation, which has been already sufficiently explained,—and partly in consequence of the fallacy which lurks in the vague and general proposition of those things being beautiful which are neither too big nor too little, too massive nor too slender, &c.; from which it was concluded, that beauty must consist in mediocrity;—not considering that the particle *too* merely denotes those degrees which are exclusive of beauty, without in any way fixing what those degrees are. For the plain meaning of these phrases is, that the rejected objects are too massive or too slender to be beautiful; and, therefore, to say that an object is beautiful which is neither too big nor too little, &c., is really saying nothing more than that beautiful objects are such as are not in any degree ugly or disagreeable. The illustration as to the effects of use or custom in the article of dress is singularly inaccurate and delusive; the fact being, that we never admire the dress which we are most accustomed to see,—which is that of the common people,—but the dress of the few who are distinguished by rank or opulence; and that we require no more custom or habit to make us admire this dress, whatever it may be, than is necessary to associate it in our thoughts with the wealth and dignity of those who wear it.

We must say nothing in this place of the opinions expressed on the subject of beauty by Dr. Gerard, Dr. Blair, and a whole herd of Rhetoricians, because none of them pretend to have any new or original notions with regard to it, and, in general have been at no pains to reconcile or render consistent the various accounts of the matter, which they have contented themselves with assembling and laying before their readers altogether, as affording among them the best explanation that could be offered of the question. Thus they do not scruple to say, that the sense of beauty is sometimes produced by the mere organic affection of the senses of sight or hearing; at other times, by a perception of a kind of regular variety; and in other instances by the association of interesting conceptions; thus abandoning any attempt to answer the radical question,—how the feeling of beauty should be excited by such opposite causes?—and confounding together, without discrimination, those theories which imply the existence

of a separate sense or faculty, and those which resolve our sense of beauty into other more simple or familiar emotions.

Of late years, however, we have had three publications on the subject of a far higher character, we mean Mr. Alison's Essays on the nature and principles of taste, Mr. Payne Knight's Analytical inquiry into the same subjects, and Dugald Stewart's Dissertations on the beautiful, and on taste, in his volume of Philosophical Essays. All these works possess an infinite deal of merit, and have among them disclosed almost all the truth that is to be known on the subject; though, as it seems to us, with some little admixture of error, from which it will not, however, be difficult to separate it.

Mr. Alison maintains, that all beauty, or at least that all the beauty of material objects, depends on the associations that may have connected them with the ordinary affections or emotions of our nature; and in this, which is the fundamental point of his theory, we conceive him to be no less clearly right, than he is convincing and judicious, in the copious and beautiful illustration by which he has sought to establish its truth. When he proceeds, however, to assert, that our sense of beauty consists not merely in the suggestion of ideas of emotion, but in the contemplation of a connected series of such ideas, and indicates a state of mind in which the faculties, half active and half passive, are given up to a sort of reverie or musing, in which they may wander, though among kindred impressions, far enough from the immediate object of perception, we will confess that he not only seems to us to advance a very questionable proposition, but very essentially to endanger the evidence, as well as the consistency, of his general doctrine. We are far from denying, that in minds of sensibility and reflecting habits, the contemplation of beautiful objects will be apt, especially in moments of leisure, and when the mind is vacant, to give rise to such trains of thought, and to such protracted meditations; but we cannot possibly admit that their existence is necessary to the perception of beauty, or that it is in this state of mind exclusively that the sense of beauty exists. The perception of beauty, on the contrary, we hold to be, in most cases, quite instantaneous, and altogether as immediate as the perception of the external qualities of the objects to which it is ascribed. Indeed it seems only necessary to recollect, that it is to a present material object that we actually ascribe and refer this beauty, and that the only thing to be explained is, how this object comes to appear beautiful. In the long train of interesting meditations, however, to which Mr. Alison refers,—in the delightful reveries in which he would make the sense of beauty consist, it is obvious that we must soon lose sight of the external object which gives the first impulse to our thoughts; and though we may afterwards reflect *upon it,* with increased interest and gratitude, as the parent of *many charming images, it* is impossible, we conceive, that the percep-

tion of its beauty can ever depend upon a long series of various and shifting emotions.

It likewise occurs to us to observe, that if every thing was beautiful, which was the occasion of a train of ideas of emotion, it is not easy to see why objects that are called ugly should not be entitled to that appellation. If they are sufficiently ugly not to be viewed with indifference, they too will give rise to ideas of emotion, and those ideas are just as likely to run into trains and series as those of a more agreeable description. Nay, as contrast itself is one of the principles of association, it is not at all unlikely, that, in the train of impressive ideas which the sight of ugly objects may excite, a transition may be ultimately made to such as are connected with pleasure; and, therefore, if the perception of the beauty of the object which first suggested them depended upon its having produced a series of ideas of emotion or even of agreeable emotions, there seems to be no good reason for doubting, that ugly objects may thus be as beautiful as any other, and that beauty and ugliness may be one and the same thing. Such is the danger, as it appears to us, of deserting the object itself, or going beyond its immediate effect and impression, in order to discover the sources of its beauty. Our view of the matter is safer, we think, and far more simple. We consider the object to be associated either in our past experience, or by some universal analogy, with pleasures, or emotions that upon the whole are pleasant, and that these associated pleasures are instantaneously suggested, as soon as the object is presented, and by the first glimpse of its physical properties; with which, indeed, they are consubstantiated and confounded in our sensations.

The work of Mr. Knight is more lively, various, and discursive, than Mr. Alison's, but not so systematic or conclusive. It is the cleverer book of the two, but not the most philosophical discussion of the subject. He agrees with Mr. Alison in holding the most important, and indeed, the only considerable part of beauty, to depend upon association, and has illustrated this opinion with a great variety of just and original observation. But he maintains, and maintains stoutly, that there is a beauty independant of association—prior to it, and more original and fundamental—the primitive and natural beauty of colours and sounds. Now, this we look upon to be a heresy, and a heresy inconsistent with the very first principles of catholic philosophy. We shall not stop at present to give our reasons for this opinion, which we shall illustrate at large before we bring this article to a close; but we beg leave merely to suggest at present, that if our sense of beauty be confessedly in most cases the mere image or reflection of pleasures or emotions that have been associated with objects in themselves indifferent, it cannot fail to appear strange that it should also on some few occasions be a mere organic or sensual gratification of the particular *organs*. Language, it is believed, affords no other example of

so whimsical a combination of different objects under one appellation, or of the confounding of a direct physical sensation with the suggestion of a social or sympathetic moral feeling. We would observe also, that while Mr. Knight stickles so violently for this alloy of the senses in the constitution of beauty, he admits, unequivocally, that sublimity is, in every instance, and in all cases, the effect of association alone. Yet sublimity and beauty, in any just or large sense, and with a view to the philosophy of either, are manifestly one and the same; nor is it conceivable to us, that, if sublimity be always the result of an association with ideas of power or danger, beauty can possibly be, in any case, the result of a mere pleasurable impulse on the nerves of the eye or ear. We shall return, however, to this discussion hereafter. Of Mr. Knight we have only further to observe, that we think he is not heretical in maintaining, that we have no pleasure in sympathizing with distress or suffering, but only with mental energy; and that, in contemplating the sublime, we are moved only with a sense of power and grandeur, and never with any feeling of terror or awe.

With Mr. Stewart we have less occasion for quarrel; chiefly, perhaps, because he had made fewer positive assertions, and entered less into the matter of controversy. His essay on the beautiful is rather philological than metaphysical. The object of it is to show by what gradual and successive extensions of meaning the word, though at first appropriated to denote the pleasing effect of colours alone, might naturally come to signify all the other pleasing things to which it is now applied. In this investigation he makes many admirable remarks, and touches, with the hand of a master, upon many of the disputable parts of the question; but evades the particular point at issue between us and Mr. Knight, by stating, that it is quite immaterial to his purpose, whether the beauty of colours be supposed to depend on their organic effect on the eye, or on some association between them and other agreeable emotions, it being enough for his purpose that this was probably the first sort of beauty that was observed, and that to which the name was at first exclusively applied. It is evident to us, however, that he leans to the opinion of Mr. Knight, as to this beauty being truly sensual or organic. In observing, too, that beauty is not now the name of any one thing or quality, but of very many different qualities, and that it is applied to them all, merely because they are often united in the same objects, or perceived at the same time and by the same organs; it appears to us that he carries his philology a little too far, and disregards other principles of reasoning of far higher authority. To give the name of beauty, for example, to every thing that interests or pleases us through the channel of sight, including in this category the mere impulse of light that is pleasant to the organ, and the presentment of objects whose whole charm consists in awakening *the memory of social* emotions, seems to us to be confounding

things together that must always be separate in our feelings, and giving a far greater importance to the mere identity of the organ of perception, than is warranted either by the ordinary language or ordinary experience of men. Upon the same principle we should give this name of beautiful, and no other, to all acts of kindness and magnanimity, and, indeed, to every interesting occurrence which took place in our sight, or came to our knowledge by means of the eye :—nay, as the ear is also allowed to be a channel for impressions of beauty, the same name should be given to any interesting or pleasant thing that we hear, and good news read to us from the *Gazette* should be denominated beautiful, just as much as a fine composition of music. These things, however, are never called beautiful, and are felt, indeed, to afford a gratification of quite a different nature. It is no doubt true, as Mr. Stewart has observed, that beauty is not one thing, but many; and does not produce one uniform emotion, but an infinite variety of emotions. But this we conceive is not merely because many pleasant things may be intimated to us by the same sense, but because the things that are called beautiful may be associated with an infinite variety of agreeable emotions, of the specific character of which their beauty will consequently partake; nor does it follow, from the fact of this great variety, that there can be no other principle of union among those agreeable emotions, but that of a name, extended to them all upon the very slight ground of their coming through the same organ; since, upon our theory, and indeed upon Mr. Stewart's, in a vast majority of instances, there is the remarkable circumstance of their being all suggested by association with some present sensation, and all modified to our feelings by an actual and direct perception.

It is unnecessary, however, to pursue these criticisms, or, indeed, this hasty review of the speculations of other writers, any farther. The few observations we have already made, will enable the intelligent reader, both to understand in a general way what has been already done on the subject, and in some degree prepare him to appreciate the merits of that theory, substantially the same with Mr. Alison's, which we shall now proceed to illustrate somewhat more in detail.

The basis of it is, that the beauty which we impute to outward objects, is nothing more than the reflection of our own inward emotions, and is made up entirely of certain portions of love, pity, and affection, which have been connected with these objects, and still as it were belong to them, and move us anew whenever they are presented to our observation. Before proceeding to bring any proof of the truth of this proposition, there are two things that it may be proper to explain a little more distinctly. First, what are the primary affections, by the suggestion of which the sense of beauty is produced? and secondly, what is the nature of the connexion by which we suppose that the objects we call beautiful are *enabled* to suggest these affections?

With regard to the first of these points, it fortunately is not necessary either to enter into any tedious details, or to have recourse to any nice distinctions. All sensations that are not absolutely indifferent, and are at the same time, either agreeable, when experienced by ourselves, or attractive when contemplated in others, may form the foundation of the emotions of sublimity or beauty. The love of sensation seems to be the ruling appetite of human nature; and many sensations, in which the painful seem to bear no little share, are consequently sought for with avidity, and recollected with interest, even in our own persons. In the persons of others, emotions still more painfull are contemplated with eagerness and delight; and therefore we must not be surprised to find that many of the pleasing sensations of beauty or sublimity resolve themselves ultimately into recollections of feelings that may appear to have a very opposite character. The sum of the whole is, that every feeling which it is agreeable to experience, to recall, or to witness, may become the source of beauty in external objects, when it is so connected with them as that their appearance reminds us of that feeling. Now, in real life, and from daily experience and observation, we know that it is agreeable in the first place, to recollect our pleasurable sensations, or to be enabled to form a lively conception of the pleasures of other men, or even of sentient beings of any description. We know likewise, from the same sure authority, that there is a certain delight in the remembrance of our past or the conception of our future emotions, even though attended with great pain, provided they be not forced too rudely on the mind, and be softened by the accompaniment of any milder feeling. And finally we know, in the same manner, that the spectacle or conception of the emotions of others, even when in a high degree painful, is extremely interesting and attractive, and draws us away, not only from the consideration of indifferent objects, but even from the pursuit of light or frivolous enjoyments. All these are plain and familiar facts, of the experience of which, however they may be explained, no one can entertain the slightest doubt, and into which, therefore, we shall have made no inconsiderable progress, if we can resolve the more mysterious fact, of the emotions we receive from the contemplation of sublimity or beauty.

Our proposition then is, that these emotions are not original emotions, nor produced directly by any qualities in the objects which excite them; but are reflections, or images, of the more radical and familiar emotions to which we have already alluded; and are occasioned, not by any inherent virtue in the objects before us, but by the accidents, if we may so express ourselves, by which these may have been enabled to suggest or recall to us our own past sensations or sympathies. We might almost venture indeed, to lay it down as an axiom, that *except in the plain and palpable* case of bodily pain or pleasure, we

can never be interested in anything but the fortunes of sentient beings; and that everything partaking of the nature of mental emotion must have for its object the feelings, past, present, or possible, of something capable of sensation. Independent therefore, of all evidence, and without the help of any explanation, we should have been apt to conclude, that the emotions of beauty and sublimity must have for their objects the sufferings or enjoyments of sentient beings; and to reject, as intrinsically absurd and incredible, the supposition, that material objects, which obviously do neither hurt nor delight the body, should yet excite, by their mere physical qualities, the very powerful emotions which are sometimes excited by the spectacle of beauty.

Of the feelings, by their connexion with which external objects become beautiful, we do not think it necessary to speak more minutely; and, therefore, it only remains, under this preliminary view of the subject, to explain the nature of that connexion by which we conceive this effect to be produced. Here, also, there is but little need for minuteness, or fullness of enumeration. Almost every tie by which two objects can be bound together in the imagination in such a manner as that the presentment of the one shall recall the memory of the other; or, in other words, almost every possible relation which can subsist between such objects, may serve to connect the things we call sublime or beautiful, with feelings that are interesting or delightful. It may be useful, however, to class these bonds of association between mind and matter in a rude and general way.

It appears to us, then, that objects are sublime or beautiful, first, when they are the natural signs, and perpetual concomitants of pleasurable sensations, or, at any rate, of some lively feeling or emotion in ourselves or in some other sentient beings; or, secondly, when they are the arbitrary or accidental concomitants of such feelings; or, thirdly, when they bear some analogy or fanciful resemblance to things with which these emotions are necessarily connected. In endeavouring to illustrate the nature of these several relations, we shall be led to lay before our readers some proofs that appear to us satisfactory of the truth of the general theory.

The most obvious, and the strongest association that can be established between inward feelings and external objects is, where the object is necessarily and universally connected with the feeling by the law of nature, so that it is always presented to the senses when the feeling is impressed upon the mind, as the sight or the sound of laughter, with the feeling of gaiety; of weeping with distress; of the sound of thunder, with ideas of danger and power. Let us dwell for a moment on the last instance. Nothing, perhaps, in the whole range of nature, is more strikingly and universally sublime than the sound we have just mentioned; yet it seems obvious that the sense of *sublimity is produced*, not by any quality that is perceived by the

son, but altogether by the impression of power and of danger that is necessarily made upon the mind, whenever that sound is heard. That it is not produced by any peculiarity in the sound itself, is certain, from the mistakes that are frequently made with regard to it. The noise of a cart rolling over the stones, is often mistaken for thunder; and as long as the mistake lasts, this very vulgar and insignificant noise is actually felt to be prodigiously sublime. It is so felt, however, it is perfectly plain, merely because it is associated with ideas of prodigious power and undefined danger; and the sublimity is destroyed, the moment the association is dissolved, though the sound itself, and its effect on the organ, continue exactly the same. This, therefore, is an instance in which sublimity is distinctly proved to consist, not in any physical quality of the object to which it is ascribed, but in its necessary connexion with that vast and uncontrolled power which is the natural object of awe and veneration.

We may now take an example a little less plain and elementary. The most beautiful object in nature, perhaps, is the countenance of a young and beautiful woman; and we are apt at first to imagine that, independent of all associations, the forms and colours which it displays are, in themselves, lovely and engaging, and would appear charming to all beholders, with whatever other qualities or impressions they might happen to be connected. A very little reflection, however, will probably be sufficient to convince us of the fallacy of this impression; and to satisfy us, that what we admire is not a combination of forms and colours, which could never excite any mental emotion, but a collection of signs and tokens of certain mental feelings and affections, which are universally recognised as the proper objects of love and sympathy. Laying aside the emotions arising from difference of sex, and supposing female beauty to be contemplated by the pure and unenvying eye of a female, it seems quite obvious, that, among its ingredients, we should trace the signs of two different sets of qualities that are neither of them the object of sight, but of a higher faculty; in the first place, of youth and health; and in the second place, of innocence, gaiety, sensibility, intelligence, delicacy, or vivacity. Now, without enlarging upon the natural effect of the suggestions, we shall just suppose that the appearances, which must be admitted at all events to be actually significant of the qualities we have enumerated, had been by the law of nature attached to the very opposite qualities; that the smooth forehead, the firm cheek, and the full lip, which are now so distinctly expressive to us of the gay and vigorous periods of youth, and the clear and blooming complexion, which indicates health and activity, had been in fact the forms and colours by which old age and sickness were characterized, and that, instead of being found united *to those* sources and seasons of enjoyment, they had been the badges *by which nature pointed out* that state of suffering and decay which

is now signified to us by the livid and emaciated face of sickness, or the wrinkled front, the quivering lip, and hollow cheek of age; if this were the familiar law of our nature, can it be doubted that we should look upon these appearances, not with rapture, but with aversion, and consider it as absolutely ludicrous or disgusting, to speak of the beauty of what was interpreted by every one as the lamented sign of pain and decrepitude? Mr. Knight himself, though a firm believer in the intrinsic beauty of colours, is so much of this opinion, that he thinks it entirely owing to those associations that we prefer the tame smoothness, and comparatively poor colours of a youthful face, to the richly fretted and variegated countenance of a pimpled drunkard.

Such we conceive, would be the inevitable effect of dissolving the subsisting connexion between the animating ideas of hope and enjoyment, and those visible appearances which are now significant of those emotions, and derive their whole beauty from that signification; but the effect would be still stronger if we could suppose the moral expression of those appearances to be reversed in the same manner. If the smile, which now enchants us, as the expression of innocence and affection, were the sign attached by nature to guilt and malignity; if the blush which expresses delicacy and the glance that speaks intelligence, vivacity, and softness, had always been found united with brutal passion or idiot moodiness; is it not certain, that the whole of their beauty would be extinguished, and that our emotions from the sight of them would be the reverse of what they now are?

That the beauty of a living and sentient creature should depend, in a great degree, upon qualities peculiar to such a creature, rather than upon the mere physical attributes which it may possess in common with the inert matter around it, cannot indeed appear a very improbable supposition to any one; but it may be more difficult for some persons to understand how the beauty of mere dead matter should be derived from the feelings and sympathies of sentient beings. It is absolutely necessary, therefore, that we should give an instance or two of this derivation.

It is easy enough to understand how the sight of a picture or statue should affect nearly in the same way as the sight of the original; nor is it much more difficult to conceive, how the sight of a cottage should give us something of the same feeling as the sight of a peasant's family; and the aspect of a town raise many of the same ideas as the appearance of a multitude of persons. We may begin, therefore, with an example a little more complicated; take, for instance, the case of a common English landscape—green meadows with fat cattle—canals or navigable rivers—well fenced, well cultivated fields—neat, clean, scattered cottages—humble antique church with church-yard elms, and crossing hedge-rows—all seen under bright skies, and in good weather:—*there is much* beauty, as every one will acknowledge, in

such a scene. But in what does the beauty consist? Not certainly in the mere mixture of colours and forms; for colours more pleasing and lines more graceful (according to any theory of grace that may be preferred), might be spread upon a board, or a painter's pallet, without engaging the eye to a second glance, or raising the least emotion in the mind; but in the picture of human happiness that is presented to our imaginations and affections, in the visible and unequivocal signs of comfort, and cheerful and peaceful enjoyment, and of that secure and successful industry that ensures it continuance, and of the piety by which it is exalted, and of the simplicity by which it is contrasted with the guilt and fever of a city life; in the images of health and temperance and plenty which it exhibits to every eye, and in the glimpses which it affords to warmer imaginations of the primitive or fabulous times, when man was uncorrupted by luxury and ambition, and of those humble retreats in which we still delight to imagine that love and philosophy may find an unpolluted asylum. At all events, however, it is human feeling that excites our sympathy, and forms the object of our emotions. It is man, and man alone, that we see in the beauties of the earth which he inhabits; or, if a more sensitive and extended sympathy connect us with the lower families of animated nature, and make us rejoice with the lambs that bleat on the uplands, or the cattle that ruminate in the valley, or even with the living plants that drink the bright sun and the balmy air it is still the idea of enjoyment of feelings that animate the existence of sentient beings, that calls forth all our emotions, and is the parent of all the beauty with which we proceed to invest the inanimate creation around us.

Instead of this quiet and tame English landscape, let us now take a Welsh or a Highland scene, and see whether its beauties will admit of being explained on the same principle. Here we shall have lofty mountains, and rocky and lonely recesses,—tufted woods hung over precipices,—lakes intersected with castled promontories,—ample solitudes of unploughed and untrodden valleys,—nameless and gigantic ruins,—and mountain echoes repeating the scream of the eagle and the roar of the cataract. This, too, is beautiful; and to those who can interpret the language it speaks, far more beautiful than the prosperous scene with which we have contrasted it. Yet, lonely as it is, it is to the recollection of man and of human feelings that its beauty also is owing. The mere forms and colours that compose its visible appearance, are no more capable of exciting any emotion in the mind, than the forms and colours of a Turkey carpet. It is sympathy with the present or the past, or the imaginary inhabitants of such a region, that alone gives it either interest or beauty; and the delight of those who behold it, will always be found to be in exact proportion to the force of their imaginations, and the warmth of their social affections. The leading impressions here, are those of romantic seclusion and primeval sim-

plicity; lovers sequestered in these blissful solitudes, 'from towns and toils remote,' and rustic poets and philosophers communing with nature, at a distance from the low pursuits and selfish malignity of ordinary mortals; then is the sublime impression of the mighty power which piled the massive cliffs upon each other, and rent the mountains asunder, and scattered their giant fragments at their base; and all the images connected with the monuments of ancient magnificence and extinguished hostility, the feuds, and the combats, and the triumphs of its wild and primitive inhabitants, contrasted with the stillness and desolation of the scenes where they lie interred; and the romantic ideas attached to their ancient traditions, and the peculiarities of their present life, their wild and enthusiastic poetry, their gloomy superstitions, their attachment to their chiefs, the dangers and the hardships and enjoyments of their lonely huntings and fishings, their pastoral shieling on the mountains in summer, and the tales and the sports that amuse the little groups that are frozen into their vast and trackless valleys in the winter. Add to all this, the traces of vast and obscure antiquity that are impressed on the language and the habits of the people, and on the cliffs, and caves, and gulfy torrents of the land; and the solemn and touching reflection, perpetually recurring, of the weakness and insignificance of perishable man, whose generations thus pass away into oblivion, with all their toils and ambition, while nature holds on her unvarying course, and pours out her streams, and renews her forests, with undecaying activity, regardless of the fate of her proud and perishable sovereign.

We have said enough, we believe, to let our readers understand what we mean by external objects being the natural signs or concomitants of human sympathies or emotions. Yet we cannot refrain from adding one other illustration, and asking on what other principle we can account for the beauty of spring? Winter has shades as deep, and colours as brilliant; and the great forms of nature are substantially the same through all the revolutions of the year.

We shall seek in vain, therefore, for the sources of that 'vernal delight and joy' which subject all finer spirits to an annual intoxication, and strike home the sense of beauty even to hearts that seem proof against it under all other aspects. And it is not among the dead, but among the living, that this beauty originates. It is the renovation of life and of joy to all animated beings, that constitutes this great jubilee of nature; the young of animals bursting into existence; the simple and universal pleasures which are diffused by the mere temperature of the air, and the profusion of sustenance; the pairing of birds; the cheerful resumption of rustic toils; the great alleviation of all the miseries of poverty and sickness; our sympathy with the young life; and the promise and the hazards of the vegetable creation; the *solemn*, yet cheering, impression of the constancy of

nature to her great periods of renovation; and the hopes that dart spontaneously forward with the new circle of exertions and enjoyments that is opened up by her hand and her example. Such are some of the conceptions that are forced upon us by the appearances of returning spring; and that seem to account for the emotions of delight with which these appearances are hailed by every mind endowed with any degree of sensibility, somewhat better than the brightness of the colours, or the agreebleness of the smells that are then presented to our senses.

They are kindred conceptions that constitute the beauty of childhood. The forms and colours that are peculiar to that age, are not necessarily or absolutely beautiful in themselves; for, in a grown person, the same forms and colours would be either ludicrous or disgusting. It is their indestructible connection with the engaging ideas of innocence, of careless gaiety, of suspecting confidence; made still more tender and attractive by the recollection of helplessness, and blameless and happy ignorance of the anxious affection that watches over all their ways; and the hopes and fears that seek to pierce futurity, for those who have neither fears nor cares nor anxieties for themselves.

These few illustrations will probably be sufficient to give our readers a general conception of the character and grounds of that theory of beauty which we think affords the only true or consistent account of its nature. They are all examples, it will be observed, of the *first* and most important connection which we think may be established between external objects and the sentiments or emotions of the mind; or cases in which the visible phenomena are the natural and universal accompaniments of the emotion, in some degree, in the breast of every beholder. If the tenor of these illustrations has been such as to make any impression in favour of the general theory, we conceive that it must be very greatly confirmed by the slightest consideration of the *second* class of cases, or those in which the external object is not the natural and necessary, but only the occasional or accidental concomitant of the emotion which it recalls. In the former instances, some conception of beauty seems to be inseparable from the appearance of the objects; and being impressed, in some degree, upon all persons to whom they are presented, there is evidently room for insinuating that it is an independent and intrinsic quality of their nature; and does not arise from association with anything else. In the instances, however, in which we are now to allude, this perception of beauty is not universal, but entirely dependant upon the opportunities which each individual has had to associate ideas of emotion with the object to which it is ascribed; the same thing appearing beautiful to those who have been exposed to the influence of such associations, and indifferent to those who have not. Such instances, therefore, really

afford *experimentum crucis* to the truth of the theory in question; nor is it easy to conceive any more complete evidence, both that there is no such thing as absolute or intrinsic beauty, and that it depends altogether on those associations with which it is thus found to come and to disappear.

The accidental or arbitrary relations that may thus be established between natural sympathies or emotions and external objects, may be either such as occur to whole classes of men, or are confined to particular individuals. Among the former, those that apply to different nations or races of men, are the most important and remarkable; and constitute the basis of those peculiarities by which national tastes are distinguished. Take again, for example, the instance of female beauty, and think what different and inconsistent standards would be fixed for it in the different regions of the world; in Africa, in Asia, and in Europe, in Tartary and in Greece, in Lapland, Patagonia, and Circassia. If there was anything absolutely or intrinsically beautiful in any of the forms thus distinguished, it is inconceiveable that men should differ so outrageously in their conceptions of it. If beauty was a real and independent quality, it seems impossible that it should be distinctly and clearly felt by one set of persons, where another set, altogether as sensitive, could see nothing but its opposite. And if it were actually and inseparably attached to certain forms, colours, or proportions, it must appear utterly inexplicable that it should be felt and perceived in the most opposite forms and proportion, in objects of the same description. On the other hand, if all beauty consist in reminding us of certain natural sympathies and objects of emotion, it is easy to perceive how the most different forms should be felt to be equally beautiful. If female beauty, for instance, consist in the visible signs and expressions of youth and health, and of gentleness, vivacity, and kindness, then it will necessarily happen, that the forms, and colours, and proportions, which nature may have connected with those qualities, in the different climates or regions of the world, will all appear equally beautiful to those who have been accustomed to recognise them as the signs of such qualities; while they will be respectively indifferent to those who have not learned to interpret them in this sense, and displeasing to those whom experience has led to consider them as the signs of opposite qualities. The case is the same, though perhaps to a smaller degree, as to the peculiarity of national taste in other particulars.

The style of dress and architecture in every nation, if not adopted from mere want of skill, or penury of materials, always appears beautiful to the natives, and somewhat monstrous and absurd to foreigners. And the general character and aspect of their landscape, in like manner, if not associated with substantial evils and inconveniences, always appears more beautiful and enchanting than the scenery of any other

region. The fact is still more striking, perhaps, in the case of music; in the effects of those national airs with which even the most uncultivated imaginations have connected so many interesting recollections; and in the delight with which all persons of sensibility catch the strains of their native melodies in strange or in distant lands. It is owing chiefly to the same sort of arbitrary and national association, that white is thought a gay colour in Europe, where it is used at weddings, and a dismal colour in China, where it is used for mourning; that we think yew trees gloomy, because they are planted in church-yards, and large masses of powdered horsehair majestic, because we see them on the heads of judges and bishops.

Next to these curious instances of arbitrary or limited associations that are exemplified in the diversities of national taste, are those that are produced by the differences of instruction or education. If external objects were sublime or beautiful in themselves, it is plain, that they would appear equally so to those who were acquainted with their origin, and to those to whom it was unknown. Yet it is not easy, perhaps, to calculate the degree to which our notions of beauty and sublimity are now influenced, over all Europe, by the study of classical literature; or the number of impressions of this sort which the well-educated receive, from objects that are utterly indifferent to uninstructed persons of the same natural sensibility. We gladly avail ourselves, upon this subject, of the beautiful expressions of Mr. Alison.

'The delight which most men of education receive from the consideration of antiquity, and the beauty that they discover in every object which is connected with ancient times, is in a great measure to be ascribed to the same cause. The antiquarian, in his cabinet, surrounded with the relics of former ages, seems to himself to be removed to periods that are long since past, and indulges in the imagination of living in a world, which, by a very natural kind of prejudice, we are always willing to believe was both wiser and better than the present. All that is venerable or laudable in the history of these times, present themselves to his memory. The gallantry, the heroism, the patriotism of antiquity, rise again before his view, softened by the obscurity in which they are involved, and rendered more seducing to the imagination by that obscurity itself, which, while it mingles a sentiment of regret amid his pursuits, serves at the same time to stimulate his fancy to fill up, by its own creation, those long intervals of time of which history has preserved no record. The relics he contemplates, seem to approach him still nearer to the ages of his regard. The dress, the furniture, the arms of the times, are so many assistances to his imagination, in guiding or directing its exercise; and offering him a thousand sources of imagery, provide him with an almost inexhaustable field in which his memory and his fancy may expatiate. There are *few men who have* not felt somewhat, at least, of the delight of such

an employment. There is no man in the least acquainted with the history of antiquity, who does not love to let his imagination loose on the prospect of its remains, and to whom they are not in some measure sacred, from the innumerable images which they bring. Even the peasant, whose knowledge of former times extends but to a few generations, has yet in his village some monument of the deeds or virtues of his forefathers; and cherishes with a fond veneration, the memorial of those good old times to which his imagination returns with delight, and of which he loves to recount the simple tales that tradition has brought him.

'And what is it that constitutes that emotion of sublime delight, which every man of common sensibility feels upon the first prospect of Rome. It is not the scene of destruction which is before him; it is not the Tiber, diminished in his imagination to a paltry stream, flowing amid the ruins of that magnificence which it once adorned; it is not the triumph of superstition over the wreck of human features, and its monuments erected upon the very spot where the first honours of humanity have been gained. It is ancient Rome which fills his imagination. It is the country of Cæsar, and Cicero, and Virgil, which is before him. It is the mistress of the world which he sees, and who seems to him to rise again from her tomb, to give laws to the universe. All that the labours of his youth, or the studies of his maturer age have required, with regard to the history of this great people, open at once before his imagination, and present him with a field of high and solemn imagination, which can never be exhausted. Take from him these associations, conceal from him that it is Rome that he sees, and how different would be his emotion!'

The influence of the same studies may be traced, indeed, through almost all our impressions of beauty, and especially in the feelings which we receive from the contemplation of rural scenery; where the images and recollections which have been associated with such objects, in the enchanting strains of the poets, are perpetually recalled by their appearance, and give an interest and a beauty to the prospect of which the uninstructed cannot have the slightest conception. Upon this subject, also, Mr. Alison has expressed himself with his usual warmth and elegance. After observing that in childhood the beauties of nature have scarcely any existence for those who have as yet but little general sympathy with mankind, he proceeds to state, that they are usually first recommended to notice by the poets, to whom we are introduced in the course of education; and who, in a manner, create them for us by the associations which they enable us to form with their visible appearance.

'How different, from this period, become the sentiments with which the scenery of nature is contemplated by those who have any imagination. *The beautiful forms* of ancient mythology, with which the

fancy of poets peopled every element, are now ready to appear to their minds upon the prospect of every scene. The descriptions of ancient authors, so long admired, and so deserving of admiration, occur to them at every moment, and with them all those enthusiastic ideas of ancient genius and glory, which the study of so many years of youth so naturally leads them to form. Or if the study of modern poetry has succeeded to that of the ancient, a thousand other beautiful associations are acquired, which, instead of destroying, serve easily to unite with the former, and to afford a new source of delight. The awful forms of Gothic superstition, the wild and romantic imagery, which the turbulence of the middle ages, the crusades, and the institution of chivalry, have spread over every country of Europe, arise to the imagination in every scene; accompanied with all those pleasing recollections of prowess, and adventure, and courteous manners, which distinguish those memorable times. With such images in their minds, it is not common nature that appears to surround them. It is nature embellished and made sacred by the memory of Theocritus and Virgil, Milton and Tasso; their genius seems still to linger among the scenes which inspired it, and to irradiate every object where it dwells; and the creation of their fancy seem the fit inhabitants of that nature, which their descriptions have clothed with beauty.'

It is needless, for the purpose of mere illustration, to pursue this subject of arbitrary or accidental association through all the divisions of which it is susceptible; and, indeed, the task would be endless, since there is scarcely any class in society which could not be shown to have peculiar associations of interest and emotion with objects which are not so connected in the minds of any other class. The young and the old, the rich and the poor, the artist and the man of science, the inhabitants of the city and the inhabitants of the country, the man of business and the man of pleasure, the domestic and the dissipated,—nay, even the followers of almost every different study or profession, have perceptions of beauty, because they have associations with external objects that are peculiar to themselves, and have no existence for any other persons. But though the detail of such instances could not fail to show, in the clearest and most convincing manner, how directly the notion of beauty is derived from some more radical and familiar emotion, and how many and various are the channels by which such emotions are transmitted, enough, perhaps, has been said to put our readers in possession of the principles and bearings of an argument which we must not think of exhausting.

Before entirely leaving this branch of the subject, however, let us pause for a moment on the familiar but very striking and decisive instance of our varying and contradictory judgments, as to the beauty of the successive fashions of dress that have existed within our own remembrance. All persons who still continue to find amusement in

society, and are not old enough to enjoy only the recollections of their youth, think the prevailing fashions becoming and graceful, and the fashions of twenty or twenty-five years old intolerably ugly and ridiculous. The younger they are, and the more they mix in society, this impression is the stronger; and the fact is worth noticing, because there is really no one thing as to which persons judging merely from their feelings, and therefore less likely to be misled by any systems or theories, are so very positive and decided, as that established fashions are beautiful in themselves; and that exploded fashions are intrinsically and beyond all question preposterous and ugly. We have never yet met a young lady or gentleman, who spoke from their hearts and without reserve, who had the least doubt on the subject, or could conceive how any person could be so stupid as not to see the intrinsic elegance of the reigning mode, or not to be struck with the ludicrous awkwardness of the habits in which their mothers were disguised. Yet there can be no doubt, that if these ingenious critics had been born, with the same natural sensibility to beauty, but twenty years earlier, they would have joined in admiring what they now laugh at, as certainly as those who succeed them twenty years hereafter will laugh at them. It is plain, then, and we think scarcely disputed, out of the circles to which we have alluded, that there is, in the general case, no intrinsic beauty or deformity in any of those fashions; and that the forms, and colours, and materials, that are, we may say, universally and very strongly felt to be beautiful while they are in fashion, are sure to lose all their beauty as soon as the fashion has passed away. Now the forms, and colours, and combinations, remain exactly as they were; and therefore, it seems perfectly obvious, that the source of their successive beauty and ugliness must be sought in something extrinsic, and can only be found in the associations which once recommended and ultimately degraded them in our estimation. While they were in fashion, they were the forms and colours which distinguished the rich and the noble, the eminent, the envied, the observed in society. They were the forms and the colours in which all that was beautiful, and admired, and exalted, were habitually arrayed. They were associated, therefore, with the ideas of opulence, and elegance, and gaiety, and all that is captivating and bewitching, in manners, fortune, and situation; and derived the whole of their beauty from those associations. By and bye, however, they were deserted by the beautiful, the rich, and the elegant, and descended to the vulgar and dependant; or were only seen in combination with the antiquated airs of faded beauties or obsolete beaux. They thus came to be associated with ideas of vulgarity and derision, and with the images of old and decayed persons, whom it is difficult for their juniors to believe ever to have been young or attractive; and the associations being thus reversed, in which all their beauty consisted, the beauty itself will then naturally disappear.

The operation of the same causes is distinctly visible in all the other apparent irregularities of our judgments as to this description of beauty Old people have in general but little toleration for the obsolete fashions of their later or middle years; but will generally stickle for the intrinsic elegance of those which were prevalent in the bright days of their early youth, as being still associated in their recollections with the beauty with which they were first enchanted, and the gay spirits with which they were then inspired. In the same way, while we laugh at the fashions of which fine ladies or gentlemen were proud in the days of our childhood, because they are now associated only with images of decrepitude and decay, we look with some feelings of veneration on the habits of more remote generations, the individuals of which are only known to us as historical persons: and with unmingled respect and admiration on those still more ancient habiliments which remind us either of the heroism of the feudal chivalry, or the virtue and nobleness of classical antiquity. The iron mail of the Gothic knight, or the clumsy shield and naked arms of the Roman warrior, strike us as majestic and graceful, merely because they are associated with nothing but tales of romantic daring or patriotic prowess. While the full bottomed periwigs that were added to the soldier's equipment in the days of Louis XIV. and King William—and no doubt had a noble effect in the eyes of that generation—now appear to us equally ridiculous and unbecoming, merely because such appendages are no longer to be seen, but upon the heads of sober and sedentary lawyers, or in the pictures of antiquated esquires.

We cannot afford, however, to enlarge any farther upon these considerations, and are inclined, indeed, to think, that what has been already said on the subject of associations, which, though not universal, are common to whole classes of persons, will make it unnecessary to enlarge on those that are peculiar to each individual. It is almost enough, indeed, to transcribe the following short passage from Mr. Alison.

'There is no man, who has not some interesting associations with particular scenes, or airs, or books, and who does not feel their beauty or sublimity enhanced to him by such connections. The view of the house where one was born, of the school where one was educated, and where the gay years of infancy were passed, is indifferent to no man. They recal so many images of past happiness and past affections, they are connected with so many strong or valued emotions, and lead altogether to so long a train of feelings and recollections, that there is hardly any scene which one ever beholds with so much rapture. There are songs also, that we have heard in our infancy, which, when brought to our remembrance in after years, raise emotions for which we cannot well account; and which, though perhaps very indifferent in themselves, still continue from this association, and from the

variety of conceptions which they kindle in our minds, to be our favourites through life. The scenes which have been distinguished by the residence of any person, whose memory we admire, produce a similar effect. *Movemur enim, nescio quo pacto, locis ipsis, in quibus eorum, quos deligimus, aut admiramur adsunt vestigea.* The scenes themselves may be little beautiful; but the delight with which we recollect the traces of their lives, blends itself insensibly with the emotions which the scenery excites; and the admiration which these recollections afford, seems to give a kind of sanctity to the place where they dwelt, and converts everything into beauty which appears to have been connected with them.'

There are similar impressions as to the sort of scenery to which we have been long accustomed, as to the style of personal beauty by which we were first enchanted, and even as to the dialect, or the form of versification which we first began to admire, that bestow a secret and adventitious charm upon all these objects, and enable us to discover in them a beauty which is invisible, because it is non-existent to every other eye.

In all the cases we have hitherto considered, the external object is supposed to have acquired its beauty by being actually connected with the causes of our natural emotions, either as a sign of their existence, or as being locally present to their ordinary occasions. There is a relation, however, of another kind, to which it is necessary to attend, both to elucidate the general grounds of the theory, and to explain several appearances that might otherwise expose it to objections. This is the relation which external objects may bear to our internal feelings, and the power they may consequently acquire of suggesting them, in consequence of a sort of resemblance or analogy which they seem to have to their natural and appropriate objects. The language of poetry is founded, in a great degree, upon this analogy; and all language, indeed, is full of it; and attests, by its structure, both the extent to which it is spontaneously pursued, and the effects that are produced by its suggestion. We take a familiar instance from the elegant writer to whom we have already referred.

'What, for instance, is the impression we feel from the scenery of spring? The soft and gentle green with which the earth is spread, the feeble texture of the plants and flowers, and the remains of winter yet lingering among the woods and hills, all conspire to infuse into our minds somewhat of that fearful tenderness with which infancy is usually beheld. With such a sentiment, how innumerable are the ideas which present themselves to our imagination! Ideas, it is apparent, by no means confined to the scene before our eyes, or to the possible desolation which may yet await its infant beauty, but which almost involuntarily extend themselves to analogies with the life of man, and bring before us all those images of hope or fear, which,

according to our peculiar situations, have the dominion of our hearts! The beauty of autumn is accompanied with a similar exercise of thought. The leaves begin then to drop from the trees; the flowers and shrubs, with which the fields were adorned in the summer months, decay; the woods and groves are silent: the sun himself seems gradually to withdraw his light, or to become enfeebled in his power. Who is there, who, at this season, does not feel his mind impressed with a sentiment of melancholy? or who is able to resist that current of thought, which, from such appearances of decay, so naturally leads him to the solemn imagination of that inevitable fate, which is to bring on alike the decay of life, of empire, and of nature itself?'

A thousand such analogies, indeed, are suggested to us by the most familiar aspects of nature. The morning and the evening present the same ready picture of youth and of closing life, as the various vicissitudes of the year. The withering of flowers images out to the languor of beauty, or the sickness of childhood. The loud roar of troubled waters seem to bear some resemblance to the voice of lamentation or violence; and the softer murmur of brighter streams, to be expressive of cheerfulness and innocence, the purity and transparency of water or of air, indeed, is itself felt to be expressive of mental purity and gaiety; and their darkness or turbulence, of mental gloom and dejection. The genial warmth of autumn suggests to us the feeling of mild benevolence; the sunny gleams and fitful showers of early spring reminds us of the waywardness of infancy; flowers waving on their slender stems, impress us with the notion of flexibility and lightness of temper. All fine and delicate forms are typical of delicacy and gentleness of character; and almost all forms, bounded by waving or flowing lines suggest ideas of ease, pliability, and elegance; rapid and impetuous motion seem to be emblematical of violence and passion; slow and steady motion, of deliberation, dignity, and resolution; fluttering motion, of inconstancy or terror; and waving motion, according as it is slow or swift, of sadness or playfulness. A lofty tower or a massive building gives us the idea of firmness and elevation of character; a rock battered by the waves, of fortitude in adversity; stillness and calmness in the water or the air, seem to shadow tenderness, indolence, and placidity; moonlight we call pensive and gentle; and the unclouded sun gives us an impression of exulting vigour, and domineering ambition and glory.

It is not difficult, with the assistance which language affords us, to trace the origin of all these, and a thousand other associations. In many instances, the qualities which thus suggest mental emotions, do actually resemble their constant concomitants in human nature, as is obviously the case with the forms and motions which are sublime or *beautiful*; and, in some, their effects and relations bear so obvious an *analogy to those of human* conduct or feeling, as to force itself upon

the notice of the most careless beholder. But, whatever may have been their original, the very structure of language attests the vast extent to which they have been carried, and the nature of the suggestions to which they are indebted for their interest or beauty. If we speak familiarly of the sparkling of wit, and the darkness of melancholy, can it be at all difficult to conceive that bright light may be agreeable, because it reminds us of gaiety, and darkness oppressive, because it is felt to be emblematical of sorrow? It is very remarkable, indeed, that, while almost all the words by which the affections of the mind are expressed, seem to have been borrowed originally from the qualities of matter, the epithets by which we learn afterwards to distinguish such material objects as are felt to be sublime or beautiful, are all of them epithets that had been previously appropriated to express some quality or emotion of mind. Colours are said to be gay or grave; motions to be lively, or deliberate, or capricious; forms to be delicate or modest; sounds to be animated or mournful; prospects to be cheerful or melancholy; rocks to be bold; waters to be tranquil; and a thousand other phrases of the same import; all indicating, most unequivocally, the sources from which our interest in matter is derived, and proving, that it is necessary, in all cases, to confer mind and feeling upon it, before it can be conceived as either sublime or beautiful. The great charm, indeed, and the great secret of poetical diction, consists in thus lending life and emotion to all the objects it embraces; and the enchanting beauty which we sometimes recognise in descriptions of very ordinary phenomena, will be found to arise from the force of imagination, by which the poet has connected with human emotions, a variety of objects, to which common minds could not discover their relations. What the poet does for his readers, however, by his original similes and metaphors in these higher cases, even the dullest of these readers do, in some degree, every day for themselves, and the beauty which is perceived, when natural objects are unexpectedly vivified by the glowing fancy of the former, is precisely of the same kind that is felt when the closeness of the analogy enables them to force human feelings upon the recollection of all mankind. As the poet sees more of beauty in nature than ordinary mortals, just because he perceives more of these analogies and relations to social emotion, in which all beauty consists, so other men see more or less of this beauty, exactly as they happen to possess that fancy, or those habits, which enable them readily to trace out these relations.

From all these sources of evidence, then, we think it is pretty well made out, that the beauty or sublimity of external objects is nothing but the reflection of emotions excited by the feelings or condition of sentient beings; and is produced altogether by certain little portions, as it were, of love, joy, pity, veneration, or terror, that adhere to those *objects that* are present on occasion of such emotions. Nor, after

what we have already said, does it seem to be necessary to reply to more than one of the objections to which we are aware that this theory is liable. If beauty be nothing more than a reflection of love, pity, or veneration, how comes it, it may be asked, to be distinguished from these sentiments? They are never confounded with each other, either in our feelings or our language:—why, then, should they all be confounded under the common name of beauty? And why should beauty, in all cases, affect us in a way so different from the love or compassion, of which it is said to be merely the reflection?

Now, to these questions, we are somewhat tempted to answer, after the manner of our country, by asking, in our turn, whether it be really true, that beauty always affects us in one and the same manner, and always in a different manner from the simple and elementary affections which it is its office to recall to us? In very many cases, it appears to us, that the sensations which we receive from objects that are felt to be beautiful, and that in the highest degree, do not differ at all from the direct movements of tenderness or pity towards sentient beings. If the epithet of beauty be correctly (as it is universally) applied to many of the most admired and enchanting passages in poetry, which consist entirely in the expression of affecting sentiments, the question would be speedily decided; and it is a fact, at all events, too remarkable to be omitted, that some of the most powerful and delightful emotions that are uniformly classed under this name, arise altogether from the direct influence of these pathetic emotions, without the intervention of any material imagery. We do not wish however, to dwell upon an argument, which certainly is not applicable to all parts of the question; and, admitting that, on many occasions, the feelings which we experience from beauty, are sensibly different from the primary emotions in which we think they originate, we shall endeavour to give an explanation of this difference, which seems to be perfectly consistent with the theory we have undertaken to illustrate.

In the first place, it should make some difference on the primary affections to which we have alluded, that, in the cases alluded to, they are reflected from material objects, and not directly excited by their natural causes. The light of the moon has a very different complexion from that of the sun—though it is in substance the sun's light; and glimpses of interesting, or even of familiar objects, caught unexpectedly from a mirror placed at a distance from these objects, will affect us, like sudden allusions in poetry, very differently from the natural perception of those objects in their ordinary relations. In the next place, the emotion, when suggested in the shape of beauty, comes upon us, for the most part, disencumbered of all those accompaniments which frequently give it a peculiar and less satisfactory character, when it arises from direct intercourse with its living objects. The compassion, for example, that is suggested by beauty of a gentle and

winning description, is not attended with any of that disgust and uneasiness which frequently accompany the spectacle of real distress; nor with that importunate suggestion of the duty of relieving it, from which it is almost inseparable; nor does the temporary delight which we receive from beauty of a gay and animating character, call upon us for any such expenditure of spirits, or active demonstration of sympathy, as are sometimes demanded by the turbulence of real joy. In the third place, the emotion of beauty, being partly founded upon illusion, is far more transitory in its own nature, and is both more apt to fluctuate and vary in its character, and more capable of being dismissed at pleasure, than any of the primary affections, whose shadow and representative it is. In the fourth place, the perception of beauty implies a certain exercise of the imagination that is not required in the case of direct emotion, and is sufficient, of itself, both to give a new character to every emotion that is suggested by the intervention of such an exercise, and to account for our classing all the various emotions that are so suggested under the same denomination of beauty. When we are injured, we feel indignation; when we are wounded, we feel pain; when we see suffering, we feel compassion; and when we witness any splendid act of heroism or generosity, we feel admiration, without any effort of the imagination, or the intervention of any picture or vision in the mind. But when we feel indignation, or pity, or admiration, in consequence of seeing some piece of inanimate matter that merely suggests or recalls to us the ordinary causes or proper objects of these emotions, it is evident that our fancy is kindled by a sudden flash of recollection; and that the effect is produced by means of a certain poetical creation that is instantly conjured up in the mind. It is this active and heated state of the imagination, and this divided and busy occupation of the mind, that constitute the great peculiarity of the emotions we experience from the perception of beauty.

Finally, and this is perhaps the most important consideration of the whole, it should be recollected, that, along with the shadow or suggestion of associated emotions, there is always present a real and direct perception, which not only gives a warmth and liveliness to all the images which it suggests, but seems to impart to them some share of its own reality. That there is an illusion of this kind in the case, is sufficiently demonstrated by the fact, that we invariably ascribe the interest which we think has been proved to arise wholly from these associations, to the object itself, as one of its actual and inherent qualities, and consider its beauty as no less a property belonging to it, than any of its physical attributes. The associated interest, therefore, is beyond all doubt confounded with the present perception of the object itself; and a livelier and more instant impression is accordingly made upon the mind than if the interesting conceptions had been

merely excited in the memory by the usual operation of reflection or voluntary meditation. Something analogous to this is familiarly known to occur in other cases. When we merely think of our absent friend, our emotions are incomparably less lively than when the recollection of him is suddenly suggested by the unexpected sight of his picture, of the house where he dwelt, or the spot on which we last parted from him ; and all these objects seem for the moment to wear the colours of our associated affections. When Captain Cook's companions found, in the remotest corner of the habitable globe, a broken spoon with the word London stamped upon it, and burst into tears at the sight, they proved how differently we are moved by emotions thus connected with the real presence of an actual perception, than by the mere recollection of the objects on which those emotions depend. Every one of them had probably thought of London every day since he left it, and many of them might have been talking of it with tranquility but a little before this effectual appeal was made to their sensibility.

If we add to all this, that there is necessarily something of vagueness and variableness in the emotions most generally excited by the perception of beauty, and that the mind wanders with the eye, over the different objects which may supply these emotions, with a degree of unsteadiness, and half voluntary, half involuntary fluctuation, we may come to understand how the effect not only should be essentially different from that of the simple presentiment of any one interesting conception, but should acquire a peculiarity which entitles it to a different denomination. Most of the associations of which we have been last speaking, as being founded on the analogies or fanciful resemblances that are felt to exist between physical objects and qualities, and the interesting affections of mind, are intrinsically of this vague and wavering description ; and when we look at a fine landscape, or any other scene of complicated beauty, a great variety of such images are suddenly presented to the fancy, and as suddenly succeeded by others, as the eye ranges over the different features of which it is composed, and feeds upon the charms which it discloses. Now, the direct perception, in all such cases, not only perpetually accompanies the associated emotions, but is inextricably confounded with them in our feelings, and is even recognised upon reflection as the cause, not merely of their unusual strength, but of the several peculiarities by which we have shown that they are distinguished. It is not wonderful, therefore, either that emotion so circumstanced should not be classed along with similar affections under circumstances extremely different, or that the perception of present existence, thus mixed up, and indissolubly confounded with interesting conceptions, should between them produce a sensation of so distinct a nature as naturally to be distinguished by a peculiar name ; or that the beauty which results from this combination should, in ordinary language, be ascribed to the

objects themselves, the presence and perception of which is a necessary condition of its existence.

What we have now said is enough, we believe, to give an attentive reader that general conception of the theory before us, which is all that we can hope to give in the narrow limits to which we are confined. It may be observed, however, that we have spoken only of those sorts of beauty which we think capable of being resolved into some passion or emotion, or pretty lively sentiment of our nature; and though these are undoubtedly the highest and most decided kinds of beauty, it is certain that there are many things called beautiful which cannot claim so lofty a connection. It is necessary, therefore, to observe, that though everything that excites any feeling worthy to be called an emotion by its beauty or sublimity, will be found to be related to the natural objects of human passions or affections. There are many things which are pleasing or agreeable enough to be called beautiful, in consequence of their relation merely to human convenience and comfort; many others that please by suggesting ideas of human skill and ingenuity; and many that obtain the name of beautiful, by being associated with human fortune, vanity, or splendour. After what has been already said, it will not be necessary either to exemplify or explain these subordinate phenomena. It is enough merely to suggest, that they all please upon the same great principle of sympathy with human feelings; and are explained by the simple and indisputable fact, that we are pleased with the direct contemplation of human comfort, ingenuity, and fortune. All these, indeed, obviously resolve themselves into the great object of sympathy; human enjoyment, convenience, and comfort, is but another name for a lower, but very indispensable ingredient of that emotion. Skill and ingenuity readily present themselves as means by which enjoyment may be promoted; and high fortune, and opulence, and splendour, pass, at least at a distance, for its certain causes and attendants. The beauty of fitness and adaptation of parts, even in the works of nature, is derived from the same fountain, partly by means of its obvious analogy to works of human skill, and partly by suggestions of that creative power and wisdom, to which human destiny is subjected. The feelings, therefore, associated with all those qualities, though scarcely rising to the height of emotion, are obviously in a certain degree pleasing or interesting; and when several of them happen to be united in one object, may accumulate to a very great degree of beauty. It is needless, we think, to pursue these general propositions through all the details to which they so obviously lead. We shall confine ourselves, therefore, to a very few remarks upon the beauty of architecture, and chiefly as an illustration of our general position.

There are few things about which men of virtue are more apt to rave than the merits of the Grecian architecture; and most of those who

affect an uncommon purity and delicacy of taste, talk of the intrinsic beauty of its proportions as a thing not to be disputed, except by barbarian ignorance and stupidity. Mr. Alison, we think, was the first who gave a full and convincing refutation of this mysterious dogma; and, while he admits, in the most ample terms, the beauty of the objects in question, has shown, we think, in the clearest manner, that it arises entirely from the combination of the following associations:—1st, the association of utility, convenience, or fitness for the purposes of the building; 2nd, of security and stability, with a view to the nature of the materials; 3rd, of the skill and power requisite to mould such materials into forms so commodious; 4th, of magnificence, and splendour, and expense; 5th, of antiquity; and, 6th, of Roman and Grecian greatness. His observations are summed up in the following short sentence:—

'The proportions,' he observes, 'of these orders, it is to be remembered, are distinct subjects of beauty, from the ornaments with which they are embellished, from the magnificence with which they are executed, from the purposes of elegance they are intended to serve, or the scenes of grandeur they are destined to adorn. It is in such scenes, however, and with such additions, that we are accustomed to observe them; and, while we feel the effect of all these accidental associations, we are seldom willing to examine what are the causes of the complex emotion we feel, and readily attribute to the nature of the architecture itself the whole pleasure which we enjoy. But, besides these, there are other associations we have with these forms that still more powerfully serve to command our admiration; for they are the Grecian orders; they derive their origin from those times, and were the ornament of those countries which are most hallowed in our imaginations; and it is difficult for us to see them, even in their modern copies, without feeling them operate upon our minds as relics of those polished nations where they first arose, and of that greater people by whom they were afterwards borrowed.'

This analysis is to us perfectly satisfactory; but, indeed, we cannot conceive any more complete refutation of the notion of an intrinsic and inherent beauty in the proportions of the Grecian architecture, than the fact of the admitted beauty of such very opposite proportions in the Gothic. Opposite as they are, however, the great elements of beauty are the same in this style as in the other; the impressions of religious awe and of chivalrous recollections coming here in place of the classical associations which constitute so great a share of the interest of the former. It is well observed by Mr. Alison that the great durability and costliness of the productions of this art have had the effect, in almost all regions of the world, of rendering their fashion permanent after it had once attained such a degree of perfection as to *fulfil its substantial purposes.*

'Buildings,' he observes, 'may last and are intended to last for centuries. The life of man is very inadequate to the duration of such productions; and the present period of the world, though old with respect to those arts which are employed upon perishable subjects, is yet young in relation to an art, which is employed upon so durable materials as those of architecture. Instead of a few years, therefore, centuries must probably pass before such productions demand to be renewed; and long before that period is elapsed, the sacredness of antiquity is acquired by the subject itself, and a new motive given for the preservation of similar forms. In every country, accordingly, the same effect has taken place; and the same causes which have thus served to produce among us, for so many years, an uniformity of taste with regard to the style of Grecian architecture, have produced also among the nations of the East, for a much longer course of time, a similar uniformity of taste with regard to their ornamental style of architecture; and have perpetuated among them the same forms which were in use among their forefathers, before the Grecian orders were invented.'

It is not necessary, we think, to carry these illustrations any farther; as the theory they are intended to explain, is now, we believe, universally adopted, though with some limitations, which we see no reason to retain. Those suggested by Mr. Alison, we have already endeavoured to dispose of in the few remarks we have made upon his publication; and it only remains to say a word or two more upon Mr. Knight's doctrine as to the primitive and independent beauty of colours, upon which we have already hazarded some remarks.

Agreeing as he does with Mr. Alison, and all modern inquirers, that the whole beauty of objects consists, in the far greater number of instances, in the associations to which we have alluded, he still maintains that some few visible objects affect us with a sense of beauty in consequence of the pleasurable impression they make upon the sense; and that our perception of beauty is, in these instances, a mere organic sensation. Now, we have already stated, that it would be something quite unexampled in the history either of mind or of language, if certain physical and bodily sensations should thus be confounded with moral and social feelings with which they had no connection, and pass familiarly under one and the same name. Beauty consists confessedly in almost all cases, in the suggestion of moral or social emotions, mixed up and modified by a present sensation or perception; and it is this suggestion, and this identification with a present object, that constitutes its essence, and gives a common character to the whole class of feelings it produces, sufficient to justify their being designated by a common appellation. If the word beauty, in short, must mean something, and if this be very clearly what it means in all remarkable instances, it is difficult to conceive, that it should occasionally mean

something quite different, and denote a mere sensual or physical gratification, unaccompanied by the suggestion of any moral emotion whatever. According to Mr. Knight, however, and indeed, to most other writers, this is the case with regard to the beauty of colours, which depends altogether, they say, upon the delight which the eye naturally takes in their contemplation: this delight being just as primitive and sensual as that which the palate receives from the contact of agreeable flavours.

It must be admitted, we think, in the first place, that such an allegation is in itself extremely improbable, and contrary to all analogy, and all experience of the structure of language, or of the laws of thought. It is farther to be considered, too, that if the pleasures of the senses are ever to be considered as beautiful, those pleasures which are the most lively and important would be the most likely to usurp this denomination, and to take rank with the higher gratifications that result from the perception of beauty. Now, it admits of no dispute, that the mere organic pleasures of the eye are far inferior to those of the palate, the touch, and indeed almost all the other senses, none of which, however, are in any case confounded with the sense of beauty. In the next place, it should follow, that if what affords organic pleasure to the eye be properly called beautiful, what offends, or gives pain to it, should be called ugly. Now excessive or dazzling light is offensive to the eye, but, considered by itself, it is never called ugly, but only painful or disagreeable. The moderate excitement of light, on the other hand, or the soothing of certain bright but temperate colours, when considered in this primary aspect, are scarcely called beautiful, but only agreeable or refreshing; so far as the direct injury or comfort of the organ, in short, is concerned, the language which we use refers merely to physical or bodily sensation, and is not confounded with that which relates to mental emotion; and we see no ground for supposing that there is any exception to this rule.

It is very remarkable, indeed, that the sense whose organic gratification is here supposed to constitute the feeling of beauty, should be one, in the first place, whose direct organic gratifications are of very little force or intensity; and, in the next place, one whose office it is, almost exclusively, to make us acquainted with the existence and properties of those external objects which are naturally interesting to our inward feelings and affections. This peculiarity makes it extremely probable, that ideas of emotion should be associated with the perception of this sense, but extremely improbable, that its naked and unassociated sensations should in any case be classed with such emotions. If the name of beauty were given to what directly gratifies any sense, such as that of tasting or smelling which does not make us acquainted with the nature or relations of outward objects, there could be less room for such an explanation. But when it is the business of a

particular sense or organ to introduce to our knowledge those objects which are naturally connected with ideas of emotion, it is easy to understand how its perceptions should be associated with these emotions, and an interest and importance thus extended to them, that belong to the intimations of no other bodily organ. But, on those very accounts we should be prepared to suspect, that all the interest they possess is derived from this association; and to distrust the accuracy of any observations that may lead us to conclude that its mere organic impulses ever produced anything akin to those associated emotions, or entitled to pass under their name. This caution will appear still more reasonable, when it is considered, that all the other qualities of visible objects, except only their colours, are now admitted to be perfectly indifferent in themselves, and to possess no other beauty than they may derive from their associations with our ordinary affections. There are no forms, for example, even in Mr. Knight's opinion, that have any intrinsic beauty, or any power of pleasing or affecting us, except through their associations, or affinities to mental affections, either as expressive of fitness and utility, or as types and symbols of certain moral or intellectual qualities, in which the sources of interest are obvious. Yet the form of an object is as conspicuous an ingredient of its beauty as its colour, and a property, too, which seems at first view to be as intrinsically and independently pleasing. Why, then, should we persist in holding that colours, or combinations of colours, please from being naturally agreeable to the organ of sight, when it is admitted that other visible qualities, which seem to possess the same power of pleasing, are found, upon examination, to owe it entirely to the principle of association?

The only reason that can be assigned, or that actually exists for this distinction, is, that it has been supposed more difficult to account for the beauty of colours, upon the principles which have accounted for other beauties, or to specify the particular associations by virtue of which they could acquire this quality. Now, it appears to us that there is no such difficulty: and that there is no reason whatever for holding that one colour, or combination of colours, is more pleasing than another, except upon the same grounds of association which recommend particular forms, motions, or proportions. It appears to us, that the organic pleasures of the eye are extremely few and insignificant. It is hurt, no doubt, by an excessive glare of light; and it is in some degree gratified, perhaps, by a moderate degree of it. But it is only by the quantity or intensity of the light we think it is so affected. The colour of it, we take it, is, in all cases, absolutely indifferent. But it is the colour only that is called beautiful or otherwise; and these qualities, we think, it very plainly derives from the common fountain of association.

In the *first place*, we would ask, whether there is any colour that is

beautiful in all situations? and in the next place, whether there is any colour that is not beautiful in some situation. With regard to the first, take the colours that are most commonly referred to as being intrinsically beautiful, bright and soft green, clear blue, bright pink, or vermilion. The first is unquestionably beautiful in vernal woods and summer meadows; and, we humbly conceive, is beautiful, because it is the natural sign and concomitant of those scenes and seasons of enjoyment. Blue, again, is beautiful in the vernal sky; and as we believe, for the sake of the pleasures of which such skies are prolific; and pink is beautiful on the cheeks of a young woman, or the leaves of a rose, for reasons too obvious to be stated. We have associations enough, therefore, to recommend all these colours, in the situations in which they are beautiful; but, strong as these associations are, they are unable to make them universally beautiful—or beautiful, indeed, in any other situations. Green would not be beautiful in the sky, nor blue on the cheek, nor vermilion on the grass. It may be said, indeed, that though they are always recognised as beautiful in themselves, their obvious unfitness in such situations counteracts the effects of their beauty, and make an opposite impression, as of something monstrous and unnatural; and that, accordingly, they are all beautiful in indifferent situations, where there is no such antagonist principle, in furniture, dress, and ornaments. Now the fact, in the first place, is not so; these bright colours being but seldom and sparingly admitted in ornaments or works of art; and no man, for example, choosing to have a blue house, or a green ceiling, or a pink coat. But, in the second place, if the facts were admitted, we think it obvious, that the general beauty of these colours would be sufficiently accounted for by the very interesting and powerful associations under which all of them are so frequently presented by the hand of nature. The interest we take in female beauty, in vernal delights, in unclouded skies, is far too lively and too constantly recurring, not to stamp a kindred interest upon the colours that are naturally associated with such objects, and to make us regard with some affection and delight those hues that remind us of them, although we should only meet them upon a fan, or a dressing-box, the lining of a curtain, or the back of a screen. Finally, we beg leave to observe, that all bright and clear colours are naturally typical of cheerfulness and purity of mind, and are hailed as emblems of moral qualities, to which no one can be indifferent.

With regard to ugly colours again, we really are not aware of any to which that epithet can be safely applied. Dull and dingy hues are usually mentioned as in themselves the least pleasing. Yet these are the prevailing tints in many beautiful landscapes, and many admired pictures. They are also the most common colours that are chosen for *dress, for building,* for furniture, where the consideration of beauty is *the only motive for the choice*; in fact, the shaded parts of all coloured

objects pass into tints of this description ; nor can we at present recollect any one colour which we could specify as in itself disagreeable, without running counter to the feelings and the practice of the great mass of mankind. If the fact, however, were otherwise, and if certain muddy and dull colours were universally allowed to be disagreeable, we should think there could be no difficulty in referring these, too, to natural associations. Darkness, and all that approaches it, is naturally associated with ideas of melancholy, of helplessness, and danger ; and the gloomy hues that remind us of it, or seem to draw upon it, must share in the same associations. Lurid skies, too, it should be observed, and turbid waters, and unfruitful swamps, and dreary morasses, are the natural and most common wearers of dismal liveries. It is from these that we first become acquainted with them ; and it is needless, therefore, to say, that such objects are necessarily associated with ideas of discomfort, and sadness, and danger ; and that the colours that remind us of them, can scarcely fail to recall some of the same disagreeable sensations.

Enough, however, and more than enough, has been said about the supposed primitive and independent beauty of separate colours. It is chiefly upon the intrinsic beauty of their mixture or combinations that Mr. Knight and his adherents have insisted ; and it is no doubt quite true, that, among painters and connoisseurs, we hear a great deal about the harmony and composition of tints, and the charms and difficulties of a judicious colouring. In all this, however, we cannot help suspecting that there is no little pedantry, and no little jargon ; and that these phrases, when used without reference to the practical difficulties of the art, which must go for nothing in the present question, really mean little more than the true and natural appearance of coloured objects, seen through the same tinted or partially obscure medium that commonly constitutes the atmosphere.

In nature, we know of no discordant or offensive colouring, except what may be referred to some accident or disaster that spoils the moral or sentimental expression of the scene, and disturbs the associations upon which all its beauty, whether of forms or of hues, seems to us very plainly dependant. We are perfectly aware that ingenious persons have been disposed to dogmatize and to speculate very confidently upon these subjects ; and have had the benefit of seeing various learned treatises upon the natural gamut of colours, and the inherent congruity of those that are called complimentary, with reference to the prismatic spectrum. But we confess we have no faith in any of those fancies ; and believe, that, if all these colours were fairly arranged on a plain board, according to the most rigid rules of this supposed harmony, nobody, but the author of the theory, would perceive the smallest theory in the exhibition, or be the least offended by reversing their collocation. We do not mean, however, to dispute,

that the laws of colouring, insisted on by learned artists, will produce a more pleasing effect upon trained judges of the art, than a neglect of these laws; because we have little doubt that these combinations of colour are recommended by certain associations, which render them generally pleasing to persons so trained and educated. All that we maintain is, that there are no combinations that are originally and universally pleasing or displeasing to the eye, independent of such associations; and it seems to us an irresistible proof of this, that these laws of harmonious colouring are perpetually and deliberately violated by great multitudes of persons, who not only have the perfect use of their sight, but are actually bestowing great pains and expence in providing for its gratification, in the very act of this violation. The Dutch trader, who paints over the outside of his country house with as many bright colours as are to be found in his tulip-bed, and garnishes his green shutters with blue facings, and his purple roof with lilac ridges, not only sees as well as the studied colourist, who shudders at the exhibition, but actually receives as much pleasure, and as strong an impression of beauty, from the finished lusthaus, as the artist does from one of his best pictures. It is impossible then, that these combinations of colours can be naturally or intrinsically offensive to the organ of sight; and their beauty or ugliness must depend upon the associations which different individuals may have happened to form with regard to them. We contend, however, for nothing more; and are quite willing to allow that the associations which recommend his staring tawdriness to the burgomaster, are such as could not easily have been formed in the mind of a diligent and extensive observer of nature, and they would probably be reversed by habits of reflection and study; but the same thing, it is obvious, may be said of the notions of beauty of any other description that prevail among the rude, the inexperienced, and uninstructed; though, in all other instances, we take it for granted, that the beauty which is perceived depends altogether upon associations, and in no degree on its power of giving a pleasurable impulse to the organ to which it addresses itself. If any considerable number of persons, with the perfect use of sight, actually take pleasure in certain combinations of colours, that is complete proof that such combinations are not naturally offensive to the organ of sight, and that the pleasure of such persons, exactly like that of those who disagree with them, is derived not from the sense, but from associations with its perceptions.

With regard, again, to the effect of broken masses of light and shadow, it is proper, in the first place, to remember, that by the eye we see colour only; and that lights and shadows, as far as the mere organ is concerned, mean nothing but variations of tint. It is very true, no doubt, that we soon learn to refer many of these variations to light and *shade, and that they thus* become signs to us of depth, and distance,

and relief. But, is not this of itself sufficient to refute the idea of their affording any primitive or organic pleasure? In so far as they are mere variations of tints, they may be imitated by unmeaning daubs of paint on a pallet;—in so far as they are signs, it is to the mind that they address themselves, and not to the organ. They are signs, too, it should be recollected, and the only signs we have, by which we can receive any correct knowledge of the existence and condition of all external objects at a distance from us, whether interesting or not interesting. Without the assistance of variety of tint, and of lights and shadows, we could never distinguish one object from another, except by the touch. These appearances, therefore, are the perpetual vehicles of almost all our interesting perceptions, and are consequently associated with all the emotions we receive from visible objects. It is pleasant to see many things in one prospect, because some of them are probably agreeable; and it is pleasant to know the relations of those things, because the qualities or associations, by means of which they interest us, generally depend upon that knowledge. The mixture of colours and shades, however, is necessary to this enjoyment, and consequently is a sign of it, and a source of associated interest or beauty.

Mr. Knight, however, goes much farther than this, and maintains that the beauty which is so distinctly felt in many pictures of objects, in themselves disagreeable, is to be ascribed entirely to the effect of the brilliant and harmonious tints, and the masses of light and shadow that may be employed in the representation. The filthy and tattered rags of a beggar, he observes, and the putrifying contents of a dunghill, may form beautiful objects in a picture, because, considered as mere objects of sight, they may often present beautiful effects of colouring and shadow; and these are preserved or heightened in the imitation, disjoined from all their offensive accompaniments. Now, if the tints and shades were the exclusive sources of our gratification, and if this gratification was diminished, instead of being heightened, by the suggestion which, however transciently, must still intrude itself, that they appeared in an imitation of disgusting objects, it must certainly follow that the pleasure and the beauty would be much enhanced if there was no imitation of things whatever, and if the canvas merely presented the tints and shades, unaccompanied with the representation of any particular object. It is perfectly obvious, however, that it would be absurd to call such a collection of coloured spots a beautiful picture; and that, a man would be laughed at who should hang up such a piece of stained canvas among the works of the great artists. Again, if it were really possible for any one, but a student of art, to confine the attention to the mere colouring and shadowing of any picture, there is nothing so disgusting but what might form the subject of a beautiful imitation. A piece of putrid veal, or a cancerous

ulcer, or the rags that are taken from it, may display the most brilliant tints, and finest distribution of light and shadow. Does Mr. Knight, however, seriously think that either of these experiments would succeed? Or, are there, in reality, no other qualities in the pictures in question, to which their beauty can be ascribed, but the organic effect of their colours? We humbly conceive that there are; and that far less ingenuity than his might have been able to detect them.

There is, in the first place, the pleasing association of the skill and power of the artist, a skill and power which we know may be employed to produce unmingled delight: whatever may be the character of the particular effort before us. But, in the second place, we do humbly conceive that there are many interesting associations connected with the subjects which have been represented as purely disgusting. The aspect of human wretchedness and decay is not, at all events, an indifferent spectacle, and, if presented to us without actual offence to our senses, or any call on our active benificence may excite a sympathetic emotion, which is known to be far from undelightful. Many an attractive poem has been written on the miseries of beggars; and why should painting be supposed more fastidious? besides, it will be observed, that the beggars of the painter are generally among the most interesting of that interesting order; either young and lovely children, whose health and gaiety, and sweet expression, form an affecting contrast with their squalid garments, and the neglect and misery to which they seem to be destined; or old and venerable persons, mingling something of the dignity and reverence of age with the broken spirit of their condition, and seeming to reproach mankind for exposing heads so old and white to the pelting of the pitiless storm. While such pictures suggest images so pathetic, it looks almost like a wilful perversity, to ascribe their beauty entirely to the mixture of colours which they display, and to the forgetfulness of these images. Even for the dunghill, we think it is possible to say something, though we confess, we have never happened to see any picture, of which that useful compound forms the peculiar subject. There is the display of the painter's art and power here also; and the dunghill is not only useful, but is associated with many pleasing images of rustic toil and occupation, and of the simplicity, and comfort, and innocence of agricultural life. We do not know that a dunghill is at all a disagreeable object to look at, even in plain reality, provided it be so far off as not to annoy us with its odour or to soil us with its effusions. In a picture, however, we are safe from any of these disasters; and considering that it is usually combined, in such delineations, with other more pleasing and touching remembrances of humble happiness and contentment, we really do not see that it was at all necessary to impute any mysterious or intrinsic beauty to its complexion in order to account *for the satisfaction* with which we can then bear to behold it.

Having said so much with a view to reduce to its just value, as an ingredient of beauty, the mere organical delight which the eye is supposed to derive from colours, we really have not patience to apply the same considerations to the alleged beauty of sounds that are supposed to be insignificant. Beautiful sounds, in general, we think, are beautiful from association only, from their resembling the natural tones of various passions and affections, or from their being originally and most frequently presented to us in scenes or on occasions of natural interest or emotion. With regard, again, to successive or co-existent sounds, we do not, of course, mean to dispute, that there are such things as melody and harmony, and that most men are offended or gratified by the violation or observance of those laws upon which they depend. This, however, it should be observed, is a faculty quite unique, and unlike anything else in our constitution; by no means universal, as the sense of beauty is, even in cultivated societies, and apparently withheld from whole communities of quick-eared savages and barbarians. Whither the kind of gratification, which results from the mere musical arrangement of sounds, would be referred to a sense of beauty, or would pass under that name, if it could be presented entirely detached from any associated emotions, appears to us to be exceedingly-doubtful. Even with the benefit of these combinations, we do not find, that every arrangement which merely preserves inviolate the rules of composition is considered as beautiful; and we do not think that it would be consonant, either to the common feeling or common language of mankind, to bestow this epithet upon pieces that had no other merit. At all events, and whatever may be thought of the proper name of this singular gratification of a musical ear, it seems to be quite certain, that all that rises to the dignity of an emotion in the pleasure we receive from sounds, is as clearly the gift of association, as in the case of visible beauty; of association with the passionate tones and modulations of the human voice, with the scenes to which the interesting sounds are native, with the poetry to which they have been married, or even with the skill and genius of the artist by whom they have been arranged.

Hitherto we have spoken of the beauty of external objects only; but the whole difficulty of the theory consists in its application to them. If that be once adjusted, the beauty of immaterial objects can occasion no perplexity. Poems, and other compositions in words, are beautiful in proportion as they are conversant with beautiful objects, or as they suggest to us, in a more direct way, the moral and social emotions on which the beauty of all objects depends. Theorems and demonstrations are beautiful, according as they excite in us emotions of admiration for the genius and intellectual power of their inventors, and images of the magnificent and beneficial ends to which such discoveries may be applied; and mechanical contrivances are beautiful

when they remind us of similar talents and ingenuity, and at the same time impress us with a more direct sense of their vast utility to mankind, and of the great additional conveniences with which life is consequently adorned. In all cases, therefore, there is the suggestion of some interesting conception or emotion associated with a present perception, in which it is apparently confounded and embodied; and this, according to the whole of the preceding deduction, is the distinguishing characteristic of beauty.

Having now explained, as fully as we think necessary, the grounds of that opinion as to the nature of beauty which appears to be most conformable to the truth, we have only to add a word or two as to the necessary consequences of its adoption upon several other controversies of a kindred description.

In the first place, then, we conceive that it establishes the substantial identity of the sublime, the beautiful, and the picturesque; and, consequently, puts an end to all controversy that is not purely verbal as to the difference of those several qualities. Every material object that interests without actually hurting or gratifying our bodily feelings, must do so, according to this theory, in one and the same manner,—that is, by suggesting or recalling some emotion or affection of ourselves, or some other sentient being, and presenting, to our imagination at least, some natural object of love, pity, admiration, or awe. The interest of material objects, therefore, is always the same, and arises, in every case, not from any physical qualities they may possess, but from their association with some idea of emotion. But, though material objects have but one means of exciting emotion, the emotions they do excite are infinite. They are mirrors that may reflect all shades and all colours; and, in point of fact, do seldom reflect the same hues twice. No two interesting objects, perhaps, whether known by the name of beautiful, sublime, or picturesque, ever produced exactly the same emotion in the beholder; and no one object, it is most probable, ever moved any two persons to the very same conceptions. As they may be associated with all the feelings and affections of which the human mind is susceptible, so they may suggest those feelings in all their variety, and, in fact, do daily excite all sorts of emotions—running through every gradation, from extreme gaiety and elevation, to the borders of horrors and disgust.

Now, it is certainly true, that all the variety of emotions raised in this way, on the single basis of association, may be classed, in a rude way, under the denominations of sublime, beautiful, and picturesque, according as they partake of awe, tenderness, or admiration; and we have no other objection to this nomenclature, except its extreme imperfection, and the delusions to which we know that it has given occasion. If objects that interest by their association with ideas of *power, and danger,* and terror, are to be distinguished by the peculiar

name of sublime, why should there not be a separate name also for objects that interest by associations of mirth and gaiety, another for those that please by suggestions of softness and melancholy, another for such as are connected with impressions of comfort and tranquility, and another, for those that are related to pity, and admiration, and love, and regret, and all the other distinct emotions and affections of our nature? These are not in reality less distinguishable from each other, than from the emotions of awe and veneration that confer the title of sublime on their representatives; and while all the former are confounded under the comprehensive appellation of beauty, this partial attempt at distinction is only apt to mislead us into an erroneous opinion of our accuracy, and to make us believe, both that there is a greater conformity among the things that pass under the same name and a greater difference between those that pass under different names, than is really the case. We have seen already, that the radical error of almost all preceding inquiries, has lain in supposing that everything that passed under the name of beautiful must have some real and inherent quality in common with everything else that obtained that name. And it is scarcely necessary for us to observe, that it has been almost as general an opinion, that sublimity was not only something radically different from beauty, but actually opposite to it; whereas the fact is, that it is far more nearly related to some sorts of beauty, than many sorts of beauty are to each other; and that both are founded exactly upon the same principle of suggesting some past or possible emotion of some sentient being.

Upon this important point, we are happy to find our opinions confirmed by the authority of Mr. Stewart, who, in his essay on the beautiful, already referred to, has observed, not only that there appears to him to be no inconsistency or impropriety in such expressions as the sublime beauties of nature, or of the Sacred Scriptures; but has added, in express terms, that 'to oppose the beautiful to the sublime, or to the picturesque, strikes him as something analogous to a contrast between the beautiful and the comic—the beautiful and the tragic—the beautiful and the pathetic—or the beautiful and the romantic.'

The only other advantage which we shall specify as likely to result from the general adoption of the theory we have been endeavouring to illustrate, is, that it seems calculated to put an end to all these perplexing and vexatious questions about the standard of taste, which have given occasion to so much impertinent and so much elaborate discussion. If things are not beautiful in themselves, but only as they serve to suggest interesting conceptions to the mind, then every thing which does in point of fact suggest such a conception to any individual, is beautiful to that individual; and it is not only quite true that there is no room for disputing about tastes, but that all tastes are equally just and correct, in so far as each individual speaks only of

his own emotions. When a man calls a thing beautiful, however he may indeed mean to make two very different assertions; he may mean that it gives him pleasure, by suggesting to him some interesting emotion; and, in this sense, there can be no doubt that, if he merely speak the truth, the thing is beautiful; and that it pleases him precisely in the same way that all other things please those to whom they appear beautiful. But if he mean farther to say that the thing possesses some quality which should make it appear beautiful to every other person, and that it is owing to some prejudice or defect in them if it appear otherwise, then he is as unreasonable and absurd as he would think those who should attempt to convince him that he felt no emotion of beauty.

All tastes, then, are equally just and true, in so far as concerns the individual whose taste is in question; and what a man feels distinctly to be beautiful is beautiful to him, whatever other people may think of it. All this follows clearly from the theory now in question; but it does not follow from it that all tastes are equally good or desirable, or that there is any difficulty in describing that which is really the best and the most to be envied. The only use of the faculty of taste is to afford an innocent delight, and to aid the cultivation of a finer morality; and that man certainly will have the most delight from this faculty, who has the most numerous and the most powerful perceptions of beauty. But, if beauty consist in the reflection of our affections and sympathies, it is plain that he will always see the most beauty whose affections are warmest and most exercised, whose imagination is most powerful, and who has most accustomed himself to attend to the objects by which he is surrounded. In so far as mere feeling and enjoyment are concerned, therefore, it seems evident that the best taste must be that which belongs to the best affections, the most active fancy, and the most attentive habits of observation. It will follow pretty exactly, too, that all men's perceptions of beauty will be nearly in proportion to the degree of their sensibility and social sympathies; and that those who have no affections towards sentient beings will be just as insensible to beauty in external objects, as he, who cannot hear the sounds of his friend's voice, must be deaf to its echo.

In so far as the sense of beauty is regarded as a mere source of enjoyment, this seems to be the only distinction that deserves to be attended to; and the only cultivation that taste should ever receive, with a view to the gratification of the individual, should be through the indirect channel of cultivating the affections and powers of observation. If we aspire, however, to be creators, as well as observers of beauty, and place any part of our happiness in ministering to the gratification of others, as artists, or poets, or authors of any sort, then, indeed, a new distinction of tastes, and a far more laborious system of *cultivation will be necessary.* A man who pursues only his own

delight, will be as much charmed with objects that suggest powerful emotions, in consequence of personal and accidental associations, as with those that introduce similar emotions by means of associations that are universal and indestructable. To him, all objects of the former class are really as beautiful as those of the latter; and for his own gratification, the creation of that sort of beauty is just as important an occupation. But if he conceive the ambition of creating beauties for the admiration of others, he must be cautious to employ only such objects as are the natural signs, or the inseparable concomitants of emotions, of which the greater part of mankind are susceptible; and his taste will then deserve to be called bad and false, if he obtrude upon the public, as beautiful, objects that are not likely to be associated in common minds with any interesting impressions.

For a man himself, then, there is no taste that is either bad or false; and the only difference worthy of being attended to, is that between a great deal and a very little. Some who have cold affections, sluggish imaginations, and no habits of observation, can with difficulty discern beauty in anything; while others, who are full of kindness and sensibility, and who have been accustomed to attend to all the objects around them, feel it almost in everything. It is no matter what other people may think of the objects of their admiration; nor ought it to be any concern of theirs that the public would be astonished or offended, if they were called upon to join in that admiration. So long as no such call is made, this anticipated discrepancy of feeling need give them no uneasiness; and the suspicion of it should produce no contempt in any other persons. It is a strange aberration indeed of vanity that makes us despise persons for being happy, for having sources of enjoyment in which we cannot share; and yet this is the true account of the ridicule, which is so generally poured upon individuals who seek only to enjoy their peculiar tastes unmolested. For, if there be any truth in the theory we have been expounding, no taste is bad for any other reason than because it is peculiar, as the objects in which it delights must actually serve to suggest to the individual those common emotions and universal affections upon which the sense of beauty is everywhere founded. The misfortune is, however, that we are apt to consider all persons who make known their peculiar relishes, and especially all who create any objects for their gratification, as in some measure dictating to the public, and setting up an idol for general adoration; and hence this intolerant interference with almost all peculiar perceptions of beauty, and the unsparing derision that pursues all deviations from acknowledged standards. This intolerance, we admit, is often provoked by something of a spirit of proselytism and arrogance in those who mistake their own casual associations for natural or universal relations; and the consequence is, that mortified vanity dries up the fountain of

their peculiar enjoyment, and disenchants, by a new association of general contempt or ridicule, the scenes that had been consecrated by some innocent but accidental emotion.

As all men must have some peculiar associations, all men must have some peculiar notions of beauty, and, of course, to a certain extent, a taste that the public would be entitled to consider as false or vitiated. For those who make no demands on public admiration, however, it is hard to be obliged to sacrifice this source of enjoyment; and, even for those who labour for applause, the wisest course, perhaps, if it were only practicable, would be, to have two tastes; one to enjoy, and one to work by; one founded upon universal associations, according to which they finished those performances for which they challenged universal praise, and another guided by all casual and individual associations, through which they looked fondly upon nature, and upon the objects of their secret admiration.

[JEFFREY, FRANCIS, LORD.—(1773—1850.) Born in Edinburgh, sent to Glasgow in 1787, and removed for Session, 1791, to Queen's College, Oxford. In 1794 was admitted an advocate in Edinburgh, but with so little patronage that up to 1803 he never netted £100 per annum. As a member of the 'Speculative Society,' an intimacy formed with Sydney Smith and Henry Brougham resulted in the establishment of the *Edinburgh Review*; the opening number by Smith, but after the first three numbers edited by F. JEFFREY, and looked to by him untill June 1829, when he was made Dean of the Faculty of Advocates. He was Lord Advocate in 1830, entered Parliament in 1831, and in 1834 took his seat on the Judicial Bench. In 1815 JEFFREY settled at Craigcrook, near Edinburgh, passing his summers there until his death. In 1820, he was Lord Rector of Glasgow University. He married in 1804, a daughter of the Rev. Dr. Wilson, of St. Andrews; and, in 1813, for his second wife, Charlotte Wilkes of New York, a grand-daughter of the celebrated John Wilkes of London. Little need be said of the influence and character of the *Edinburgh Review*, which was a success from the first, and the contributions of Lord JEFFREY continued to it until his death—these papers being more than 200 in number.

ALISON ON TASTE.

INTRODUCTION.

TASTE is, in general, considered as that faculty of the human mind, by which we perceive and enjoy whatever is beautiful or sublime in the works of nature or art.

The perception of these qualities is attended with an emotion of pleasure, very distinguishable from every other pleasure of our nature, and which is accordingly distinguished by the name of the emotion of taste. The distinction of the objects of taste into the sublime and the beautiful, has produced a similar division of this emotion, into the emotion of sublimity, and the emotion of beauty.

The qualities that produce these emotions are to be found in almost every class of the objects of human knowledge; and the emotions themselves afford one of the most extensive sources of human delight. They occur to us, amid every variety of external scenery, and among many diversities of disposition and affection in the mind of man. The most pleasing arts of human invention are altogether directed to their pursuit: and even the necessary arts are exalted into dignity, by the genius that can unite beauty with use. From the earliest period of society, to its last stage of improvement, they afford an innocent and elegant amusement to private life, at the same time that they increase the splendour of national character; and in the progress of nations, as well as of individuals, while they attract attention from the pleasures they bestow, they serve to exalt the human mind, from corporeal to intellectual pursuits.

These qualities, however, though so important to human happiness, are not the objects of immediate observation; and in the attempt to investigate them, various circumstances unite to perplex our research. They are often obscured under the number of qualities with which they are accidentally combined: they result often from peculiar combinations of the qualities of objects, or the relation of certain parts of objects to each other: they are still oftener, perhaps, dependent upon the state of our own minds, and vary in their effects with the dispositions in which they happen to be observed. In all cases, while we feel the emotions they excite, we are ignorant of the causes by which they are produced; and when we seek to discover them, we have no other method of *discovery*, than that varied and patient experiment,

by which, amid these complicated circumstances, we may gradually ascertain the peculiar qualities which, by the constitution of our nature, are permanently connected with the emotions we feel.

In the employment of this mode of investigation, there are two great objects of attention and inquiry, which seem to include all that is either necessary, or perhaps possible, for us to discover on the subject of taste.

These objects are:—I. To investigate the nature of those qualities that produce the emotions of taste: and—II. To investigate the nature of that faculty, by which these emotions are received.

These investigations, however, are not to be considered only as objects of philosophical curiosity. They have an immediate relation to all the arts that are directed to the production either of the beautiful or the sublime; and they afford the only means by which the principles of these various arts can be ascertained. Without a just and accurate conception of the nature of these qualities, the artist must be unable to determine, whether the beauty he creates is temporary or permanent, whether adapted to the accidental prejudices of his age, or to the uniform constitution of the human mind; and whatever the science of criticism can afford for the improvement or correction of taste, must altogether depend upon the previous knowledge of nature and laws of this faculty.

To these inquiries, however, there is a preliminary investigation, which seems absolutely necessary, and without which every conclusion we form, must be either imperfect or vague. In the investigation of causes, the first and most important step, is the accurate examination of the effect to be explained. In the science of mind, however, as well as in that of body, there are few effects altogether simple, or in which accidental circumstances are not combined with the proper effect. Unless, therefore, by means of repeated experiments, such accidental circumstances are accurately distinguished from the phenomena that permanently characterize the effect, we are under the necessity of including in the cause, the causes also of all the accidental circumstances with which the effect is accompanied.

With the emotions of taste, in almost every instance, many other accidental emotions of pleasure are united: the various simple pleasures that arise from other qualities of the object; the pleasure of agreeable sensation, in the case of material objects; and in all, that pleasure which by the constitution of our nature is annexed to the exercise of our faculties. Unless, therefore, we have previously acquired a distinct and accurate conception of that peculiar effect which is produced on our minds, when the emotions of taste are felt, and can precisely distinguish it from the effects that are produced by these accidental qualities, we must necessarily include in the causes *of such emotions, those* qualities also, which are the causes of the

accidental pleasures with which this emotion is accompanied. The variety of systems that philosophers have adopted upon this subject, and the various emotions into which they have resolved the emotion of taste, while they afford a sufficient evidence of the numerous accidental pleasures that accompany these emotions, afford also a strong illustration of the necessity of previously ascertaining the nature of this effect, before we attempt to investigate its cause. With regard, therefore, to both these inquiries, the first and most important step is accurately to examine the nature of this emotion itself, and its distinction from every other emotion of pleasure; and our capacity of discovering either the nature of the qualities that produce the emotions of taste, or the nature of the faculty by which they are received, will be exactly proportioned to our accuracy in ascertaining the nature of the emotion itself.

When we look back to the history of these investigations, and to the theories which have been so liberally formed upon the subject, there is one fact that must necessarily strike us, viz., that all these theories have uniformly taken for granted the simplicity of this emotion; that they have considered it as an emotion too plain, and too commonly felt, to admit of any analysis; that they have as uniformly, therefore, referred it to some one principle or law of the human mind; and that they have therefore concluded, that the discovery of that one principle was the essential key by which all the pleasures of taste were to be resolved.

While they have assumed this fundamental principle, the various theories of philosophers may, and indeed must, be included in the two following classes of supposition.

I. The first class is that which resolves the emotion of taste directly into an original law of our nature; which supposes a sense, or senses, by which the qualities of beauty and sublimity are perceived and felt, as their appropriate objects; and concludes, therefore, that the genuine object of the arts of taste, is to discover, and to imitate, those qualities in every subject, which the prescription of nature has thus made essentially either beautiful or sublime.

To this first class of hypotheses belong almost all the theories of music, of architecture, and of sculpture; the theory of Mr. Hogarth, of the Abbé Winkelman, and perhaps, in its last result, also the theory of Sir Joshua Reynolds. It is the species of hypothesis which is naturally resorted to by all artists and amateurs,—by those, whose habits of thought lead them to attend more to the causes of their emotions, than to the nature of the emotions themselves.

II. The second class of hypotheses arises from the opposite view of the subject. It is that which resists the idea of any new or peculiar sense, distinct from the common principles of our nature; which supposes *some one known* and acknowledged principle or affection of

mind, to be the foundation of all the emotions we receive from the objects of taste, and which resolves, therefore, all the various phenomena into some more general law of our intellectual or moral constitution. Of this kind are the hypotheses of M. Diderot, who attributes all our emotions of this kind to the perception of relation; of Mr. Hume, who resolves them into our sense of utility; of the venerable St. Austin, who, with nobler views, a thousand years ago, resolved them into the pleasure which belongs to the perception of order and design, &c. It is the species of hypothesis most natural to retired and philosophic minds; to those, whose habits have led them to attend more to the nature of the emotions they felt, than to the causes which produced them.

If the success of these long and varied inquiries has not corresponded to the genius or the industry of the philosophers who have pursued them, a suspicion may arise that there has been something faulty in the principle of their investigation; and that some fundamental assumption has been made, which ought first to have been patiently and securely ascertained. It was this suspicion that first led to the following inquiries. It seemed to me that the simplicity of the emotion of taste, was a principle much too hastily adopted; and that the consequences which followed from it (under both these classes of hypothesis), were very little reconcileable with the most common experience of human feeling; and from the examination of this preliminary question, I was led gradually to conclusions which seemed not only to me, but to others, whose opinion I value far more than my own, of an importance not unworthy of being presented to the public. In doing this, I am conscious that I have entered upon a new and untrodden path; and I feel all my own weakness in pursuing it: yet I trust my readers will believe, that I should not have pursued it so long, if I were not convinced that it would finally terminate in views not only important to the arts of taste, but important also to the philosophy of the human mind.

The inquiries which follow, naturally divide themselves into the following parts; and are to be prosecuted in the following order:—

I. I shall begin with an analysis of the effect which is produced upon the mind, when the emotions of beauty or sublimity are felt. I shall endeavour to show, that this effect is very different from the determination of a sense; that it is not in fact a simple, but a complex emotion; that it involves, in all cases, first, the production of some simple emotion, or the exercise of some moral affection, and, secondly, the consequent excitement of a peculiar exercise of the imagination; that these concomitant effects are distinguishable, and very often distinguished in our experience; and that the peculiar pleasure of the *beautiful or the sublime* is only felt when these two effects are *conjoined, and the complex* emotion produced.

The prosecution of the subject will lead to another inquiry of some difficulty and extent, viz., into the origin of the beauty and sublimity of the qualities of matter. To this subordinate inquiry I shall devote a separate essay. I shall endeavour to show that all the phenomena are reducible to the same general principle, and that the qualities of matter are not beautiful or sublime in themselves, but as they are, by various means, the signs or expressions of qualities capable of producing emotion.

II. From this examination of the effect I shall proceed, in the second part, to investigate the causes which are productive of it; or, in other words, the sources of the beautiful and the sublime in nature and art.

In the course of this investigation I shall endeavour to show, first, that there is no single emotion into which these varied effects can be resolved; that on the contrary, every simple emotion, and therefore every object which is capable of producing any simple emotion, may be the foundation of the complex emotion of beauty or sublimity. But, in the second place, that this complex emotion of beauty or sublimity is never produced, unless, beside the excitement of some simple emotion, the imagination also is excited, and the exercise of the two faculties combined in the general effect. The prosecution of the subject, will lead me to the principal object of the inquiry, to show what is that law of mind, according to which, in actual life, this exercise or employment of imagination is excited; and what are the means by which, in the different fine arts, the artist is able to awaken this important exercise of imagination, and to exalt objects of simple and common pleasure, into objects of beauty and sublimity.

In this part of the subject, there are two subordinate inquiries which will necessarily demand attention.

1. The qualities of sublimity and beauty are discovered not only in pleasing or agreeable subjects, but frequently also in objects that are in themselves productive of pain; and some of the noblest productions of the fine arts are founded upon subjects of terror and distress. It will form, therefore, an obvious and important inquiry, to ascertain by what means this singular effect is produced in real nature, and by what means it may be produced in the compositions of art.

2. There is a distinction in the effects produced upon our minds by objects of taste; and this distinction, both in the emotions and their causes, has been expressed by the terms of sublimity and beauty. It will form, therefore, a second object of inquiry to ascertain the nature of this distinction, both with regard to these emotions and to the qualities that produce them.

III. From the preceding inquiries I shall proceed, in the last part, to investigate the *nature of* that faculty by which these emotions are *perceived and felt.* I shall endeavour to show, that it has no resem-

blance to a sense ; that as, whenever it is employed, two distinct and independent powers of mind are employed, it is not to be considered as a separate and peculiar faculty, and that it is finally to be resolved into more general principles of our constitution. These speculations will probably lead to the important inquiry, whether there is any standard by which the perfection or imperfection of our sentiments upon these subjects may be determined ; to some explanation of the means by which taste may be corrected or improved ; and to some illustration of the purposes which this peculiar constitution of our nature serves, in the increase of human happiness, and the exaltation of human character.

I feel it incumbent on me, however, to inform my readers that I am to employ, in these inquiries, a different kind of evidence from what has usually been employed by writers upon these subjects, and that my illustrations will be derived, much less from the compositions of the fine arts than from the appearances of common nature, and the experience of common men. If the fine arts are in reality arts of imitation, their principles are to be sought for in the subject which they imitate; and it is ever to be remembered, 'That music, architecture, and painting, as well as poetry and oratory, are to deduce their laws and rules from the general sense and taste of mankind, and not from the principles of these arts themselves; in other words, that the taste is not to conform to the art, but the art to the taste' (Addison). In following this mode of illustration, while I am sensible that I render my book less amusing, I trust I may render it more useful. The most effectual method to check the empiricism, either of art or of science, is to multiply, as far as possible, the number of those who can observe, and judge; and (whatever may be the conclusions of my readers with regard to my own particular opinions), I shall not have occupied their attention in vain, if I can lead them to think and to feel for themselves; to employ the powers which are given them to the ends for which they were given ; and, upon subjects where all men are entitled to judge, to disregard alike the abstract refinements of the philosopher who speculates in the closet, and the technical doctrines of the artist who dictates in the school.

ESSAY I.

ON THE NATURE OF THE EMOTIONS OF SUBLIMITY AND BEAUTY.

CHAPTER I.—OF THE EFFECT PRODUCED UPON THE IMAGINATION BY OBJECTS OF SUBLIMITY AND BEAUTY.

SEC. I.—The emotions of sublimity and beauty are uniformly ascribed, both in popular and in philosophical language, to the imagination. The fine arts are considered as the arts which are addressed to the imagination; and the pleasures they afford are described, by way of distinction, as the pleasures of the imagination. The nature of any person's taste is, in common life, generally determined by the nature or character of his imagination; and the expression of any deficiency in this power of mind, is considered as synonymous with the expression of a similar deficiency in point of taste.

Although, however, this connexion is so generally acknowledged, it is not perhaps as generally understood in what it consists, or what is the nature of that effect which is produced upon the imagination by objects of sublimity and beauty. I shall endeavour, therefore, in the first place, to state what seems to me the nature of this effect, or, in what that exercise of imagination consists, which is so generally supposed to take place, when these emotions are felt.

When any object, either of sublimity or beauty, is presented to the mind, I believe every man is conscious of a train of thought being immediately awakened in his imagination, analogous to the character or expression of the original object. The simple perception of the object, we frequently find, is insufficient to excite these emotions, unless it is accompanied with this operation of mind,—unless, according to common expression, our imagination is seized, and our fancy busied in the pursuit of all those trains of thought which are allied to this character or expression.

Thus, when we feel either the beauty or sublimity of natural scenery, —the gay lustre of a morning in spring, or the mild radiance of a summer evening,—the savage majesty of a wintry storm, or the wild magnificence of a tempestuous ocean,—we are conscious of a variety of images in our minds, very different from those which the objects themselves can present to the eye. Trains of [illegible] of solemn thought arise spontaneously within our minds; [illegible] swell with emotions, of which the objects before us seem [illegible]

cause ; and we are never so much satiated with delight, as when, in recalling our attention, we are unable to trace either the progress or the connexion of those thoughts, which have passed with so much rapidity through our imagination.

The effect of the different arts of taste is similar. The landscapes of Claude Lorraine, the music of Handel, the poetry of Milton, excite feeble emotions in our minds when our attention is confined to the qualities they present to our senses, or when it is to such qualities of their composition that we turn our regard. It is then, only, we feel the sublimity or beauty of their productions, when our imaginations are kindled by their power, when we lose ourselves amid the number of images that pass before our minds, and when we waken at last from this play of fancy, as from the charm of a romantic dream. The beautiful apostrophe of the Abbé de Lille upon the subject of gardening,

> N'avez-vous pas souvent, au lieux infrequentés,
> Rencontré tout-à-coup, ces aspects enchantés,
> Qui suspendent vos pas, dont l'image chérie
> Vous jette en une douce et longue réverie ?

is equally applicable to every other composition of taste ; and in the production of such trains of thought, seems to consist the effect which objects of sublimity and beauty have upon the imagination.

For the truth of this observation itself, I must finally appeal to the consciousness of the reader ; but there are some very familiar considerations, which it may be useful to suggest, that seem very strongly to show the connexion between this exercise of imagination and the existence of the emotions of sublimity and beauty.

SEC. II.—That unless this exercise of imagination is excited, the emotions of beauty or sublimity are unfelt, seems capable of illustration, from many instances of a very familiar kind.

I.—If the mind is in such a state as to prevent this freedom of imagination, the emotion, whether of sublimity or beauty, is unperceived. In so far as the beauties of art or nature affect the external senses, their effect is the same upon every man who is in possession of these senses. But to a man in pain or in grief, whose mind by these means is attentive only to one object or consideration, the same scene, or the same form, will produce no feeling of admiration, which, at other times, when his imagination was at liberty, would have produced it in its fullest perfection. Whatever is great or beautiful in the *scenery* of external nature, is almost constantly before us ; and *not a day passes,* without presenting us with appearances, fitted both *to charm and to elevate* our minds ; yet it is in general with a heedless

eye that we regard them, and only in particular moments that we are sensible of their power. There is no man, for instance, who has not felt the beauty of sunset; yet every one can remember many instances when this most striking scene had no effect at all upon his imagination; and when he has beheld all the magnificence with which nature generally distinguishes the close of day, without one sentiment of admiration or delight. There are times, in the same manner, when we can read the Georgics, or the Seasons, with perfect indifference, and with no more emotion than what we feel from the most uninteresting composition in prose; while in other moments, the first lines we meet with take possession of our imagination, and awaken in it such innumerable trains of imagery, as almost leave the fancy of the poet behind. In these, and similar cases of difference in our feelings, from the same objects, it will always be found that the difference arises from the state of our imaginations; from our disposition to follow out the train of thought which such objects naturally produce, or our incapacity to do it, from some other idea, which has at that time taken possession of our minds, and renders us unable to attend to anything else. That state of mind, every man must have felt, is most favourble to the emotions of taste, in which the imagination is free and unembarrassed, or, in which the attention is so little occupied by any private or particular object of thought, as to leave us open to all the impressions which the objects that are before us can produce. It is upon the vacant and the unemployed, accordingly, that the objects of taste make the strongest impression. It is in such hours alone that we turn to the compositions of music, or of poetry, for amusement. The seasons of care, of grief, or of business, have other occupations, and destroy, for the time at least, our sensibility to the beautiful or the sublime, in the same proportion that they produce a state of mind unfavourable to the indulgence of imagination.

II. The same thing is observable in criticism. When we sit down to appreciate the value of a poem, or of a painting, and attend minutely to the language or composition of the one, or to the colouring or design of the other, we feel no longer the delight which they at first produce. Our imagination in this employment is restrained, and, instead of yielding to its suggestions, we studiously endeavour to resist them, by fixing our attention upon minute and partial circumstances of the composition. How much this operation of mind tends to diminish our sense of its beauty, every one will feel, who attends to his own thoughts on such an occasion, or who will recollect how different was his state of mind, when he first felt the beauty either of the painting or the poem. It is this, chiefly, which makes it so difficult for young people, possessed of imagination, to judge of the merits of any poem or fable, and which induces them so often to give their approbation to compositions *of little value.* It is not that they are incapable of learnin

in what the merits of such composition consist; for these principles of judgment are neither numerous nor abstruse. It is not that greater experience produces greater sensibility, for this everything contradicts; but it is, because everything, in that period of life, is able to excite their imaginations, and to move their hearts, because they judge of the composition, not by its merits, when compared with other works, or by its approach to any abstract or ideal standard, but by its effect in agitating their imaginations, and leading them into that fairy land in which the fancy of youth has so much delight to wander. It is their own imagination which has the charm which they attribute to the work that excites it; and the simplest tale, or the poorest novel, is, at that time, as capable of awakening it, as afterwards the eloquence of Virgil or Rousseau. All this, however, all this flow of imagination, in which youth and men of sensibility are so apt to indulge, and which so often brings them pleasure at the expense of their taste, the labour of criticism destroys. The mind, in such an employment, instead of being at liberty to follow whatever trains of imagery the composition before it can excite, is either fettered to the consideration of some of its minute and solitary parts: or pauses amid the rapidity of its conceptions, to make them the objects of its attention and review. In these operations, accordingly, the emotion, whether of beauty or sublimity, is lost; and if it is wished to be recalled, it can only be done by relaxing this vigour of attention, and resigning ourselves again to the natural stream of our thoughts. The mathematician who investigates the demonstrations of the Newtonian philosophy, the painter who studies the designs of Raphael, the poet who reasons upon the measure of Milton, all, in such occupations, lose the delight which these several productions can give; and, when they are willing to recover their emotion, must withdraw their attention from those minute considerations, and leave their fancy to expatiate, at will, amid all the great or pleasing conceptions which such productions of genius can raise.

III. The effect which is thus produced upon the mind by temporary exertions of attention, is also more permanently produced by the difference of original character; and the degree in which the emotions of sublimity or beauty are felt, is in general proportioned to the prevalence of those relations of thought in the mind, upon which this exercise of imagination depends. The principal relation which seems to take place in those trains of thought that are produced by objects of taste, is that of resemblance; the relation, of all others, the most loose and general, and which affords the greatest range of thought for our imagination to pursue. Wherever, accordingly, these emotions *are felt,* it will be found, not only that this is the relation which principally prevails among our ideas, but that the emotion itself is proportioned to the degree in which it prevails.

In the effect which is produced upon our minds, by the different appearances of natural scenery, it is easy to trace this progress of resembling thought, and to observe, how faithfully the conceptions which arise in our imaginations, correspond to the impressions which the characters of these seasons produce. What, for instance, is the impression we feel from the scenery of spring? The soft and gentle green with which the earth is spread, the feeble texture of the plants and flowers, the young of animals just entering into life, and the remains of winter yet lingering among the woods and hills,—all conspire to infuse into our minds somewhat of that fearful tenderness with which infancy is usually beheld. With such a sentiment, how innumerable are the ideas which present themselves to our imagination! ideas, it is apparent, by no means confined to the scene before our eyes, or to the possible desolation which may yet await its infant beauty, but which almost involuntarily extend themselves to analogies with the life of man, and bring before us all those images of hope or fear, which, according to our peculiar situations, have the dominion of our heart!—The beauty of autumn is accompanied with a similar exercise of thought: the leaves begin then to drop from the trees; the flowers and shrubs, with which the fields were adorned in the summer months, decay; the woods and groves are silent; the sun himself seems gradually to withdraw his light, or to become enfeebled in his power. Who is there, who, at this season, does not feel his mind impressed with a sentiment of melancholy? or who is able to resist that current of thought, which, from such appearances of decay, so naturally leads him to the solemn imagination of that inevitable fate, which is to bring on alike the decay of life, of empire, and of nature itself? In such cases of emotion, every man must have felt, that the character of the scene is no sooner impressed upon his mind, than various trains of correspondent imagery rise before his imagination; that, whatever may be the nature of the impression, the general tone of his thoughts partakes of this nature or character; and that his delight is proportioned to the degree in which this uniformity of character prevails.

The same effect, however, is not produced upon all men. There are many, whom the prospect of such appearances in nature excites to no exercise of fancy whatever; who, by their original constitution, are more disposed to the employment of attention, than of imagination; and who, in the objects that are presented to them, are more apt to observe their individual and distinguishing qualities, than those by which they are related to other objects of their knowledge. Upon the minds of such men, the relation of resemblance has little power; the efforts of their imagination, accordingly, are either feeble or slow; and the general character of their understandings is that of steady *and precise, rather than* that of enlarged and extensive thought. It

is, I believe, consistent with general experience, that men of this description are little sensible to the emotions of sublimity or beauty: and they who have attended to the language of such men, when objects of this kind have been presented to them, must have perceived that the emotion they felt, was no greater than what they themselves have experienced in those cases where they have exerted a similar degree of attention, or when any other cause has restrained the usual exercise of their imagination. To the qualities which are productive of simple emotion, to the useful, the agreeable, the fitting, or the convenient in objects, they have the same sensibility with other men; but of the superior and more complex emotion of beauty, they seem to be either altogether unconscious, or to share in it only in proportion to the degree in which they can relax this severity of attention, and yield to the relation of resembling thought.

It is in the same manner, that the progress of life generally takes from men their sensibility to the objects of taste. The season in which these are felt in their fullest degree is in youth, when, according to common expression, the imagination is warm, or, in other words, when it is easily excited to that exertion upon which so much of the emotion of beauty depends. The business of life, in the greatest part of mankind, and the habits of more accurate thought, which are acquired by the few who reason and reflect, tend equally to produce in both, a stricter relation in the train of their thoughts, and greater attention to the objects of their consideration, than can either be expected, or can happen in youth. They become, by this means, not only less easily led to any exercise of imagination, but their associations become at the same time less consistent with the employment of it. The man of business, who has passed his life in studying the means of accumulating wealth, and the philosopher, whose years have been employed in the investigation of causes, have both not only acquired a constitution of mind very little fitted for the indulgence of imagination, but have acquired also associations of a very different kind from those which take place when imagination is employed. In the first of these characters, the prospect of any beautiful scene in nature would induce no other idea than that of its value. In the other, it would lead only to speculations upon the causes of the beauty that was ascribed to it. In both, it would thus excite ideas, which could be the foundation of no exercise of imagination, because they required thought and attention. To a young mind, on the contrary, possessed of any sensibility, how many pleasing ideas would not such a prospect afford! ideas of peace, and innocence, and rural joy, and all the unblemished delights of solitude and contemplation. In such trains of imagery, no labour *of thought, or* habits of attention are required; they rise spontaneously *in the mind, upon the* prospect of any object to which they bear the *slightest resemblance;* and they lead it almost insensibly along, in a

kind of bewitching reverie, through all its store of pleasing or interesting conceptions. To the philosopher, or the man of business, the emotion of beauty, from such a scene, would be but feebly known; but by the young mind, which had such sensibility, it would be felt in all its warmth, and would produce an emotion of delight, which not only would be little comprehended by men of a severer or more thoughtful character, but which seems also to be very little dependent upon the object which excites it, and to be derived, in a great measure, from this exercise of mind itself.

In these familiar instances, it is obvious how much the emotions of taste are connected with this state or character of imagination; and how much those habits or employments of mind, which demand attention, or which limit it to the consideration of single objects, tend to diminish the sensibility of mankind to the emotions of sublimity or beauty.

SEC. III.—There are many other instances equally familiar, which are sufficient to show, that whatever increases this exercise or employment of imagination, increases also the emotion of beauty or sublimity.

I. This is very obviously the effect of all associations. There is no man who has not some interesting associations with particular scenes, or airs, or books, and who does not feel their beauty or sublimity enhanced to him by such connections. The view of the house where one was born, of the school where one was educated, and where the gay years of infancy were passed, is indifferent to no man. They recall so many images of past happiness and past affections,—they are connected with so many strong or interesting emotions, and lead altogether to so long a train of feelings and recollections, that there is hardly any scene which one ever beholds with so much rapture. There are songs also, that we have heard in our infancy, which, when brought to our remembrance in after years, raise emotions for which we cannot well account, and which, though perhaps very indifferent in themselves, still continue, from this association, and from the variety of conceptions which they kindle in our minds, to be our favourites through life. The scenes which have been distinguished by the residence of any person, whose memory we admire, produce a similar effect. '*Novemur enim, nescio quo pacto, locis ipsis, in quibus eorum, quos diligimus, aut admiramur adsunt vestigia.*' The scenes themselves may be little beautiful; but the delight with which we recollect the traces of their lives, blends itself insensibly with the emotions which the scenery excites; and the admiration which these recollections afford, seems to give a kind of sanctity to the place where they dwelt, and converts everthing into beauty which appears to have

been connected with them. There are scenes, undoubtedly, more beautiful than Runnymede, yet, to those who recollect the great event which passed there, there is no scene, perhaps, which so strongly seizes upon the imagination; and although the emotions this recollection produces, are of a very different kind from those which the mere natural scenery can excite, yet they unite themselves so well with these inferior emotions, and spread so venerable a charm over the whole, that one can hardly persuade one's self, that the scene itself is not entitled to this admiration. The valley of Vaucluse is celebrated for its beauty, yet how much of it has been owing to its being the residence of Petrarch!

Mais ces eaux, ce beau ciel, ce vallon enchanteur,
Moins que, Pétrarque et Laure interessoient mon cœur.
La violà donc disois-je, oui, voilà cette rive
Que Pétrarque charmoit de sa lyre plaintive:
Ici Pétrarque à Laure exprimant son amour,
Voyoit naître trop tard, mourir trop tot, le jour.
Retrouverai-je encore, sur ces rocs solitaires,
De leurs chiffres unis les tendres caractères?
Une grotte écartée avoit frappé mes yeux,
Grotte sombre, dis-moi si tu les vis heureux,
M'écriois-je! un vieux tronc bordoit-il le rivage?
Laure avoit reposé sous son antique ombrage;
Je redemandois Laure á l'echo du vallon,
Et l'echo n'avoit point oublié ce doux nom,
Partout mes yeux cherchoient, voyoient, Pétrarque et Laure,
Et par eux, ces beaux lieux s'embellissoient encore.

Les Jardins, Chant 3me.

The sublime is increased, in the same manner, by whatever tends to increase this exercise of imagination. The field of any celebrated battle becomes sublime from such associations. No man, acquainted with English history, could behold the field of Agincourt, without some emotion of this kind. The additional conceptions which this association produces, and which fill the mind of the spectator on the prospect of that memorable field, diffuse themselves in some measure over the scene, and give it a sublimity which does not naturally belong to it. The majesty of the Alps themselves is increased by the remembrance of Hannibal's march over them; and who is there, that could stand on the banks of the Rubicon, without feeling his imagination kindle, and his heart beat high?

'Middleton Dale,' says Mr. Whately, 'is a cleft between rocks, ascending gradually from a romantic village, till it emerges, at about two miles distance, on the vast moorlands of the peak. It is a dismal entrance to a desert: the hills above it are bare, the rocks are of a grey colour

their surfaces are rugged, and their shapes savage, frequently terminating in craggy points, sometimes resembling vast unwieldy bulwarks, or rising in heavy buttresses one above another, and here and there a mishapen mass bulging out, hangs lowering over its base. No traces of men are to be seen, except in a road which has no effect on such a scene of desolation, and in the limekilns constantly smoking on the side. The soil is disfigured with all the tinges of brown and red, which denote barrenness; in some places it has crumbled away, and strata of loose dark stones only appear; and in others, long lines of dross, shovelled out of the mines, have fallen down the steeps. In these mines, the veins of lead, on one side of the Dale, are observed always to have corresponding veins, in the same direction, on the other; and the rocks, though differing widely in different places, yet always continue in one style for some way together, and seem to have a relation to each other. Both these appearances make it probable that Middleton Dale is a chasm rent in the mountains by some convulsion of nature beyond the memory of man, or perhaps before the island was peopled. The scene, though it does not prove the fact, yet justifies the supposition, and it gives credit to the tales of the country people, who, to aggravate its horrors, always point to a precipice, down which they say a young woman of the village threw herself headlong, in despair at the neglect of a man whom she loved; and show a cavern, where a skeleton once was discovered, but of what wretch is unknown; his bones were the only memorial left of him.'—*On Modern Gardening*, p. 93.

It is surely unnecessary to remark, how much the sublimity of this extraordinary scene is increased, by the circumstances of horror which are so finely connected with it.

One of the sublimest objects in natural scenery, is an old and deep wood covering the side of a mountain, when seen from below; yet how much greater sublimity is given to it, by Dr. Akenside, by the addition of the solemn images which, in the following lines, are associated with it!

> ———Mark the sable woods
> That shade sublime yon mountain's nodding brow
> With what religious awe the solemn scene
> Commands your steps! as if the reverend form
> Of Minos, or of Numa, should forsake
> Th' Elysian seats, and down the embowering glade,
> Move to your pausing eye.——
>
> *Pleasures of Imagination, Book* iii.

There is a passage in one of the Odes of the same poet, in which a scene, which is in general only beautiful, is rendered strikingly sublime, from the imagery with which it is associated.

'Tis thus to work her baneful power,
Suspicion waits the sullen hour
Of fretfulness and strife,
When care the infirmer bosom wrings,
Or Eurus waves his murky wings,
To damp the seats of life.
But come, forsake the scene unbless'd
Which first beheld your faithful breast
To groundless fears a prey;
Come, where with my prevailing lyre,
The skies, the streams, the groves conspire
To charm your doubts away.
Thron'd in the sun's descending car
What power unseen diffuseth far
This tenderness of mind?
What Genius smiles on yonder flood!
What God in whispers from the wood!
Bids every thought be kind?—*Ode to Suspicion.*

I know not, however, any instance where the effect of any association is so remarkable in bestowing sublimity on objects, to which it does not naturally belong, as in the following inimitable poem of Buchanan's on the month of May. This season is, in general, fitted to excite emotions very different from sublimity; and the numerous poems which have been written in celebration of it, dwell uniformly on its circumstances of 'vernal joy.' In this ode, however, the circumstances which the poet has selected, are of a kind, which, to me, appear inexpressibly sublime, and distinguish the poem itself by a degree and character of grandeur which I have never felt equalled in any other composition. The idea of it was probably taken from these fine lines of Virgil in the second Georgic, in describing the effects of spring—

Non alios, prima crescentis origine mundi
Illuxisse dies, aliumve habuisse tenorem
Crediderim: Ver illud erat, ver magnus agebat
Orbis, et hybernis parcebant flatibus Euri:
Cum primum lucem pecudes hausere, virûmque
Ferrea progenies duris caput extulit arvis,
Immissæque feræ sylvis, et sidera cœlo.

I believe, however, no man will doubt how much Buchanan has improved upon this beautiful idea.

CALENDÆ MAIÆ.

Salvete sacris deliciis sacræ
Maiæ Calendæ, lætitiæ, et mero,
Ludisque dicatæ, jocisque,
Et teneris Charitum choreis.

Salve voluptas, et nitidum decus
Anni recurrens perpetua vice,
Et flos renascentis juventæ
In senium properantis ævi.
Cum blanda veris temperies novo
Illuxit orbi, primaque secula
Fulsere flaventi metallo,
Sponte sua, sine lege justa,
Talis per omnes continuus tenor
Annos tepenti rura Favonio
Mulcebat, et nullis feraces,
Seminibus recreabat agros.
Talis beatis incubat insulis
Felicis auræ perpetuus tepor,
Et nesciis campis senectæ
Difficilis, querulique morbi.
Talis silentum per tacitum nemus
Levi susurret murmure spiritus,
Lethenque juxta obliviosam
Funereas agitat cupressos.
Forsan supremis cum Deus ignibus
Piabit orbem, lætaque secula
Mundo reducet, talis aura
Æthereos animos fovebit.
Salve fugacis gloria seculi,
Salve secunda digna dies nota,
Salve vetustæ vitæ imago,
Et specimen venientis ævi.

National associations have a similar effect in increasing the emotions of sublimity and beauty, as they very obviously increase the number of images presented to the mind. The fine lines which Virgil has dedicated in his Georgics to the praises of his native country, however beautiful to us, were yet undoubtedly read with a far superior emotion by an ancient Roman. The prodigies which the same poet has described as preceding the death of Cæsar, and the still more minute description which Lucan, in the first book of his Pharsalia, has given of such events, on the approach of the civil war, must probably have given to a Roman, who was under the dominion of such national superstitions, the strongest emotions of sublimity and terror; but we read them now without any other emotion than what arises from the beauty of the composition.

The influence of such associations, in increasing either the beauty or sublimity of musical composition, can hardly have escaped any person's *observation.* The trifling tune called Belleisle March is said,

by a very eminent writer, to have owed its popularity among the people of England, to the supposition that it was the tune which was played when the English marched into Belleisle, and to its consequent association with images of fame, and conquest, and military glory. There are other tunes of the same character, which, without any peculiar merit, yet always serve to please the people, whenever they are performed. The natives of any country which possesses a national or characteristic music, need not be reminded how strongly the performance of such airs brings back to them the imagery of their native land; and must often have had occasion to remark how inferior an emotion they excite in those who are strangers to such associations. The effect of the celebrated national song, which is said to overpower the Swiss soldier in a foreign land with melancholy and despair, and which it is therefore found necessary to forbid in the armies in which they serve, cannot surely be attributed to its composition alone, but to the recollections that it brings, and to those images that it kindles in his mind of peace, and freedom, and domestic pleasure, from which he is torn, and to which he may never return. Whatever may be the sublimity of Handel's music, the singular effect of it on some late occasions, is, doubtless, not to be ascribed to that sublimity alone, but in a peculiar manner to the place where it was performed; not only from the sacredness of that place, which is, of itself, so well fitted to excite many awful emotions; but, in a considerable degree also, from its being the repository of so many 'illustrious dead,' and the scene, perhaps of all others, most sacred to those who have any sensibility to the glories of their country.

There are associations, also, which arise from particular professions, or habits of thought, which serve very well to illustrate the same observation. No man, in general, is sensible to beauty in those subjects with regard to which he has not previous ideas. The beauty of a theory, or of a relic of antiquity, is unintelligible to a peasant. The charms of the country are altogether lost upon a citizen who has passed his life in town. In the same manner, the more that our ideas are increased, or our conceptions extended upon any subject, the greater the number of associations we connect with it, the stronger is the emotion of sublimity or beauty we receive from it.

The pleasure, for instance, which the generality of mankind receive from any celebrated painting, is trifling when compared to that which a painter feels, if he is a man of any common degree of candour. What is to them only an accurate representation of nature, is to him a beautiful exertion of genius and a perfect display of art. The difficulties which occur to his mind in the design and execution of such a performance, and the testimonies of skill, of taste, and of invention, which the accomplishment of it exhibits, excite a variety of emotions in his breast, of which the common spectator is altogether

unsusceptible ; and the admiration with which he thus contemplates the genius and art of the painter, blends itself with the peculiar emotions which the picture itself can produce, and enhances to him every beauty that it may possess.

The beauty of any scene in nature is seldom so striking to others as it is to a landscape painter, or to those who profess the beautiful art of laying out grounds. The difficulties both of invention and execution which from their professions are familiar to them, render the profusion with which nature often scatters the most picturesque beauties, little less than miraculous. Every little circumstance of form and perspective, and light and shade, which are unnoticed by a common eye, are important in theirs, and, mingling in their minds the ideas of difficulty, and facility in overcoming it, produce altogether an emotion of delight, incomparably more animated than any that the generality of mankind usually derive from it.

The delight which most men of education receive from the consideration of antiquity, and the beauty that they discover in every object which is connected with ancient times, is in a great measure to be ascribed to the same cause. The antiquarian, in his cabinet, surrounded by the relics of former ages, seems to himself to be removed to periods that are long since past, and indulges in the imagination of living in a world, which, by a very natural kind of prejudice, we are always willing to believe was both wiser and better than the present. All that is venerable or laudable in the history of those times present themselves to his memory. The gallantry, the heroism, the patriotism of antiquity rise again before his view, softened by the obscurity in which they are involved, and rendered more seducing to the imagination by that obscurity itself, which, while it mingles a sentiment of regret amid his pursuits, serves at the same time to stimulate his fancy to fill up, by its own creation, those long intervals of time of which history has preserved no record. The relics he contemplates seem to approach him still nearer to the ages of his regard. The dress, the furniture, the arms of the times, are so many assistances to his imagination, in guiding or directing its exercise, and, offering him a thousand sources of imagery, provide him with an almost inexhaustible field in which his memory and his fancy may expatiate. There are few men who have not felt somewhat, at least, of the delight of such an employment. There is no man in the least acquainted with the history of antiquity, who does not love to let his imagination loose on the prospect of its remains, and to whom they are not in some measure sacred, from the innumerable images which they bring. Even the peasant, whose knowledge of former years extends but to a few generations, has yet in his village some monument of the deeds or virtues of his forefathers ; and cherishes with a fond veneration the memorial of those good old times to which his

imagination returns with delight, and of which he loves to recount the simple tales that tradition has brought him.

And what is it that constitutes that emotion of sublime delight, which every man of common sensibility feels upon the first prospect of Rome? It is not the scene of destruction which is before him. It is not the Tiber, diminished in his imagination to a paltry stream, and stagnating amid the ruins of that magnificence which it once adorned. It is not the triumph of superstition over the wreck of human greatness, and its monuments erected upon the very spot where the first honours of humanity have been gained. It is ancient Rome which fills his imagination. It is the country of Cæsar, and Cicero, and Virgil, which is before him. It is the mistress of the world which he sees, and who seems to him to rise again from her tomb, to give laws to the universe. All that the labours of his youth, or the studies of his maturer age have acquired, with regard to the history of this great people, open at once before his imagination, and present him with a field of high and solemn imagery, which can never be exhausted. Take from him these associations, conceal from him that it is Rome that he sees, and how different would be his emotion!

II. The effect which is thus produced, by associations, in increasing the emotions of sublimity or beauty, is produced also, either in nature or in description, by what are generally termed picturesque objects. Instances of such objects are familiar to every one's observation. An old tower in the middle of a deep wood, a bridge flung across a chasm between rocks, a cottage on a precipice, are common examples. If I am not mistaken, the effect which such objects have on every one's mind, is to suggest an additional train of conceptions, beside what the scene or description itself would have suggested; for it is very obvious, that no objects are remarked as picturesque, which do not strike the imagination by themselves. They are, in general, such circumstances, as coincide, but are not necessarily connected with the character of the scene or description, and which, at first affecting the mind with an emotion of surprise, produce afterwards an increased or additional train of imagery. The effect of such objects, in increasing the emotions either of beauty or sublimity, will probably be obvious from the following instances.

The beauty of sunset, in a fine autumnal evening, seems almost incapable of addition from any circumstance. The various and radiant colouring of the clouds; the soft light of the sun, that gives so rich a glow to every object on which it falls; the long but mellow shades with which it is contrasted; and the calm and deep repose that seems to steal over universal nature,—form altogether a scene *which serves*, perhaps better than any other in the world, to satiate *the imagination with* delight. Yet there is no man who does not *know how great* an addition this fine scene is capable of receiving

from the circumstance of the evening bell. In what, however, does the effect of this most picturesque circumstance consist? Is it not in the additional images which are thus suggested to the imagination? images indeed of melancholy and sadness, but which still are pleasing, and which serve most wonderfully to accord with that solemn and pensive state of mind, which is almost irresistibly produced by this fascinating scene.

Nothing can be more beautiful than Dr. Goldsmith's description of evening, in the deserted village—

> Sweet was the sound, when oft at evening's close
> Up yonder hill the village murmur rose.
> There as I past with careless steps and slow,
> The mingling notes came soften'd from below:
> The swain responsive as the milkmaid sung,
> The sober herd that low'd to meet their young,
> The noisy geese that gabbled o'er the pool,
> The playful children just let loose from school,
> The watch-dog's voice that bay'd the whisp'ring wind,
> And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind.

Yet how much is the beauty of this description increased, by the fine circumstance with which it is closed!

> These all in soft confusion sought the shade,
> And fill'd each pause the nightingale had made.

There is a beauty of the same kind produced in the 'Seasons,' by the addition of one of the most picturesque circumstances that was ever imagined by a poet—

> —— Lead me to the mountain brow,
> Where sits the shepherd on the grassy turf,
> Inhaling, healthful, the descending sun.
> Around him feeds his many-bleating flock,
> Of various cadence, and his sportive lambs
> Their frolics play; and now the sprightly race
> Invites them forth, when swift, the signal given,
> They start away, and sweep the mossy mound
> That runs around the hill; the rampart once
> Of iron war, in ancient barbarous times.—*Spring.*

The scene is undoubtedly beautiful of itself, without the addition of the last circumstance; yet how much more beautiful does it become, by the new order of thought which this circumstance awakens in the mind, and which, contrasting the remembrance of ancient warfare and turbulent times, with the serenity and repose of the modern scene, agitate the imagination with a variety of indistinct conceptions, which otherwise could never have arisen in it!

The *physical arguments* of Buchanan, in his poem 'de Sphæra,'

against the doctrine of the motion of the earth, are probably read with little emotion; but it is impossible to read the following lines of it without delight, from the very picturesque imagery which they contain:—

Ergo tam celeri tellus si concita motu
Iret in Occasum, rurusque rediret in Ortum,
Cuncta simul quateret secum, vastoque fragore,
Templa, ædes, miserisque etiam cum civibus, urbes
Opprimerit subitæ strages inopina ruinæ.
Ipsæ etiam volucres tranantes aëra leni
Remigio alarum, celeri vertigine terræ
Abreptas gemerent sylvas, nidosque tenella
Cum sobole et chara forsan cum conjuge; nec se
Auderet zephyro solus committere turtur,
Ne procul ablatos, terra fugiente, Hymenæos
Et viduum longo luctu defleret amorem.—*Lib.* I.

There is a very striking beauty of the same kind in a little poem of Dr. Beattie's, entitled 'Retirement.'

Thy shades, thy silence, now be mine,
Thy charms my only theme;
My haunt the hollow cliff, whose pine
Waves o'er the gloomy stream.
Where the scar'd owl on pinions grey
Breaks from the rustling boughs,
And down the lone vale sails away
To more profound repose.

'All,' says Mr. Whately, in describing the Tinian Lawn at Hagley, 'all here is of an even temper, all mild, placid, and serene; in the gayest season of the day, not more than cheerful; in the stillest watch of night, not gloomy. The scene is indeed peculiarly adapted to the tranquillity of the latter, when the moon seems to repose her light on the thick foliage of the grove, and steadily marks the shade of every bough. It is delightful then to saunter here, and see the grass and the gossamer which entwines it glistening with dew, to listen and hear nothing stir, except perhaps a withered leaf, dropping gently through a tree, and sheltered from the chill, to catch the freshness of the evening air.' It is difficult to conceive anything more beautiful than this description; yet how much is its beauty increased by the concluding circumstance! 'A solitary urn, chosen by Mr. Pope for the spot, and now inscribed to his memory, when seen by a gleam of moonlight through the trees, fixes that thoughtfulness and composure to which *the mind is* insensibly led by the rest of this elegant scene.'—*On Gardening, p. 201.*

I shall conclude these instances of the effect of picturesque objects,

in increasing the emotion of beauty, with a passage from the Iliad, which contains one of the most striking images that I know of in poetry, and which I am the more willing to quote, as it has not been so much taken notice of as it deserves. It is the appearance of Achilles, when Phœnix and Ulysses are sent from the Grecian camp to appease his wrath—

Τὼ δὲ βάτην παρὰ θῖνα πολυφλοίσβοιο θαλασσης,
Πολλὰ μάλ' εὐχομένω γαιηόχῳ Ἐννοσιγαίῳ,
Ῥηϊδίως πεπιθεῖν μέγαλας φρένας Αἰακίδαο·
Μυρμιδόνων δ' ἐπί τε κλισίας καὶ νῆας ἰκέσθην,
Τὸν δ' εὗρον φρένα τερπόμενον φόρμιγγι λιγείῃ,
Καλῇ, δαιδαλέῃ, ἐπὶ δ' ἀργυρεος ζυγὸς ἦεν·
Τὴν ἄρετ ἐξ ἐναρων, πτόλιν Ἠετίωνος ὀλέσσας·
Τῇ ὅγε θυλὸν ἔτερπεν, ἄειδε δ' ἄρα κλέα ἀνδρῶν·

Iliad, Lib. ix. *v.* 182.

Thro' the still night they march, and hear the roar
Of murmuring billows on the sounding shore;
And now, arrived, where on the sandy bay,
The Myrmidonian tents and vessels lay,
Amus'd, at ease, the godlike man they found
Pleas'd with the solemn harp's harmonious sound.
With this he sooths his angry soul, and sings
Th' immortal deeds of heroes and of kings.—*Book* ix. *v.* 236.

It was impossible for the poet to have imagined any other occupation so well fitted to the mighty mind of Achilles, or so effectual in interesting the reader in the fate of him, whom Dr. Beattie calls, with truth, the most terrific human personage that poetical imagination has ever feigned.

The sublime is increased, in the same manner, by the addition of picturesque objects. The striking image with which Virgil concludes the description of the prodigies which attended the death of Cæsar, is well known—

Scilicet et tempus veniet, quum finibus illis
Agricola, incurvo terram molitus aratro,
Exesa inveniet scabra rubigine pila,
Aut gravibus rastris galeas pulsabit inanis,
Grandiaque effossis mirabitur ossa sepulcris.

There are few passages more sublime in the Pharsalia of Lucan, than the description in the third book of one of Pompey's armies, blocked up by Cæsar in a part of the country where there was no water, and where the soldiers were perishing with thirst. After describing, very minutely, the fruitless attempts of the army to obtain relief, and the miserable expedients with which they endeavoured to

supply their wants, he proceeds in the following nervous and beautiful lines, of which, I am persuaded, the last circumstance is too striking to require any comment—

O fortunati, fugiens quos barbarus hostis,
Fontibus immisto stravit per rura veneno.
Hos licet in fluvios saniem, tabemque ferarum,
Pallida Dictæis Cæsar, nascentia saxis
Infundas aconita palam, Romana juventus
Non decepta bibet—torrentur viscera flamma
Oraque sicca rigent squamosis aspera linguis;
Jam marcent venæ, nulloque humore rigatus
Aëris alternos angustat Pulmo meatus,
Rescissoque noscent suspiria dura palato.
Pandunt ora siti, nocturnumque aëra captant.
Expectant imbres, quorum modo cuncta natabant
Impulsu, et siccis vultus in nubibus hærent.
Quoque magis miseros undæ jejunia solvant
Non, super arantem Meroën, Cancrique sub axe
Qua nudi Garamantes arant, sedere, sed inter
Stagnantem Sicorim, et rapidum deprensus Iberum,
Spectat vicinos, sitiens exercitus, amnes.—*Lib* iv. *ad med.*

The fine description in the Gierusalemme Liberata, of a similar distress in the army of Godfrey, before the walls of Jerusalem, has probably been borrowed from this passage of Lucan; and it is pleasing to observe with what address Tasso has imitated, though not copied, the picturesque circumstance with which the description of the Roman poet is closed. Instead of aggravating the distress of the soldier, by the prospect of waters which he could not approach, he recalls to his remembrance the cool shades and the still fountains of his native land; a circumstance, not only singularly pathetic, but more fertile also of imagery than perhaps any other that the poet could have imagined—

S'alcun giamai tra frondeggiente rive
Puro vide stagnar liquido argento,
O giù precipitose vi acque vive
Per Alpe, o'n piaggia èrbosa à passo lento;
Quello al vago desio forma, e descrive,
E ministra materia al suo tormento.

In Thomson's description of winter in the northern regions, though the description itself is sublime, yet one additional circumstance adds powerfully to its sublimity—

Thence, winding eastward to the Tartar coast,
She sweeps the howling margin of the main,
Where, undissolving from the first of time

Snows swell on snows, amazing, to the sky,
And icy mountains, high on mountains pil'd,
Seem to the shivering sailor, from afar,
Shapeless and white, an atmosphere of clouds.
Ocean itself no longer can resist
The binding fury: but in all its rage
Of tempest, taken by the boundless frost,
Is many a fathom to the bottom chained,
And bid to roar no more—a bleak expanse
Shagg'd o'er with wavy rocks, cheerless and void
Of every life, that from the dreary months
Flies, conscious, southward. Miserable they!
Who, here entangled in the gathering ice,
Take their last look of the descending sun,
While full of death, and fierce with tenfold frost,
The long, long night, incumbent o'er their heads
Falls horrible.——

In the following masterly description of a very sublime scene in nature, by Mr. Whately, I doubt not but that it will be acknowledged, how much the sublimity of it is increased, by the very picturesque imagery which the occupations of the inhabitants afford. 'A scene at the New Weir, on the river Wye, which in itself is truly great and awful, so far from being disturbed, becomes more interesting and important, by the business to which it is destined. It is a chasm between two ranges of hills, which rise almost perpendicularly from the water; the rocks on the sides are mostly heavy masses, and their colour is generally brown; and here and there a pale craggy cliff starts up to a vast height above the rest, unconnected, broken, and bare; large trees frequently force out their way amongst them, and many of them stand far back in the covert, where their natural dusky hue is deepened by the shadow which overhangs them. The river, too, as it retires, loses itself amid the woods, which close immediately above, then rise thick and high, and darken the water. In the midst of all this gloom is an iron forge, covered with a black cloud of smoke, and surrounded with half-burned ore, with coal, and with cinders. The fuel for it is brought down a path, worn into steps, narrow, and steep, and winding among the precipices; and near it is an open space of barren moor, about which are scattered the huts of the workmen. It stands close to the cascade of the Weir, where the agitation of the current is increased by large fragments of rocks which have been swept down by floods from the banks, or shivered by tempests from the brow; and, at stated intervals, the sullen sound, from the strokes of the great hammers in the forge, deadens the roar of the waterfall.'—Page 109.

There is a similar beauty, if I am not mistaken, in the conclusion of the following passage from Mons. Diderot.

'Qu'est ce qu'il faut au péete? Est-ce une nature brute ou cultivée? paisible ou troublée? Préféra-t-il la beauté d'un jour pur et serein, à l'horreur d'une nuit obscure, où le siflement interrompu des vents se mêle par intervalles au murmure sourd et continu d'un tonnerre éloigné, et où il voit l'éclair allumer le ciel sur la tête? Préféra-t-il le spectacle d'une mer tranquille, à celui des flots agitées? le muet et froid aspect d'un palais, à la proménade parmi des ruines? un édifice construit, un éspace planté de la main des hommes, au touffu d'une antique forêt, au creux ignoré d'une roche deserte? des nappes d'eau, des bassins, des cascades, à la vûe d'une cataracte qui se brise en tombant à travers des rochers, et dont le bruit se fait entendre au loin du berger, qui a conduit son troupeau dans la montagne, et qui l'écoute avec éffroi?'—*Epitre a Mons. Grimm, sur la Poesie Dramatique.*

I shall conclude these illustrations with a very sublime one from the 'Paradise Regained' of Milton, in which I believe the force of the concluding stroke will not be denied.

> ——Either tropic now
> 'Gan thunder, and both ends of Heav'n; the clouds
> From many a horrid rift abortive, pour'd
> Fierce rain, with lightning mix'd; nor slept the winds
> Within their stony caves, but rush'd abroad
> From the four hinges of the world, and fell
> On the vext wilderness, whose tallest pines,
> Though rooted deep as high, and sturdiest oaks
> Bow'd their stiff necks, loaden with stormy blasts,
> Or torn up sheer——Ill wast Thou shrouded then,
> O patient Son of God! —*Book* iv.

In these, and a thousand other instances that might be produced, I believe every man of sensibility will be conscious of a variety of great or pleasing images passing with rapidity in his imagination, beyond what the scene or description immediately before him can of themselves excite. They seem often, indeed, to have but a very distant relation to the object that at first excited them; and the object itself appears only to serve as a hint to awaken the imagination, and to lead it through every analogous idea that has place in the memory. It is then, indeed, in this powerless state of reverie, when we are carried on by our conceptions, not guiding them, that the deepest emotions of beauty or sublimity are felt; that our hearts swell with feelings which language is too weak to express; and that, in the depth of silence and astonishment, we pay to the charm that enthrals us, the most flattering mark of our applause.

'The power of such characters in nature,' says Mr. Whately (from *whom I am happy to* borrow the following observations, not only from *the beauty of their* expression, but from their singular coincidence in

the illustration of the fact I have been endeavouring to establish), 'the power of such characters is not confined to the ideas which the objects themselves immediately suggest; for these are connected with others, which insensibly lead to subjects far distant perhaps from the original thought, and related to it only by similitude in the sensations they excite. In a prospect enriched and enlivened with inhabitants and cultivation, the attention is caught first by the circumstances which are gayest in the season, the bloom of an orchard, the festivity of a hay-field, and the carols of a harvest home; but the cheerfulness which these infuse into the mind, expands afterwards to other objects than those immediately presented to the eye; and we are thereby disposed to receive, and delighted to pursue, a variety of pleasing ideas, and every benevolent feeling. At the sight of a ruin, reflections on the change, the decay, and the desolation before us naturally occur, and they introduce a long succession of others, all tinctured with that melancholy which these have inspired; or if the monument revive the memory of former times, we do not stop at the simple fact which it records, but recollect many more coëval circumstances which we see, not perhaps as they were, but as they are come down to us, venerable with age, and magnified by fame. Even without the assistance of buildings, or other adventitious circumstances, nature alone furnishes materials for scenes which may be adapted to almost every kind of expression. Their operation is general, and their consequences infinite: the mind is elevated, depressed, or composed, as gaiety, gloom, or tranquillity prevail in the scene; and we soon lose sight of the mean, by which the character is formed. We forget the particular object it presents, and, giving way to their effects, without recurring to the cause, we follow the track they have begun, to any extent which the dispositions they accord with will allow. It suffices that the scenes of nature have power to affect our imagination and our sensibility: for such is the constitution of the human mind, that if once it is agitated, the emotion often spreads beyond the occasion: when the passions are roused, their course is unrestrained; when the fancy is on the wing, its flight is unbounded, and, quitting the inanimate objects which first gave them their spring, we may be led, by thought above thought, widely differing in degree, but still corresponding in character, till we rise from familiar subjects to the sublimest conceptions, and are wrapt in the contemplation of whatever is great or beautiful, which we see in nature, feel in man, or attribute to the Divinity.'

III. The influence of such additional trains of imagery, in increasing the emotions of sublimity or beauty, might be illustrated from many other circumstances equally familiar. I am induced to mention only the following; because it is one of the most striking that I know, and because it is probable that most men of education have at least in some degree *been conscious* of it:—the influence, I mean, of an

acquaintance with poetry in our earlier years, in increasing our sensibility to the beauties of nature.

The generality of mankind live in the world, without receiving any kind of delight from the various scenes of beauty which its order displays. The rising and setting of the sun, the varying aspect of the moon, the vicissitude of seasons, the revolution of the planets, and all the stupendous scenery that they produce, are to them only common occurrences, like the ordinary events of every day. They have been so long familiar, that they cease to strike them with any appearance either of magnificence or beauty, and are regarded by them with no other sentiments than as being useful for the purposes of human life. We may all remember a period in our lives, when this was the state of our own minds; and it is probable most men will recollect, that the time when nature began to appear to them in another view, was, when they were engaged in the study of classical literature. In most men, at least, the first appearance of poetical imagination is at school, when their imaginations begin to be warmed by the descriptions of ancient poetry, and when they have acquired a new sense, as it were, with which they can behold the face of nature.

How different, from this period, become the sentiments with which the scenery of nature is contemplated, by those who have any imagination! The beautiful forms of ancient mythology, with which the fancy of poets peopled every element, are now ready to appear to their minds, upon the prospect of every scene. The descriptions of ancient authors, so long admired, and so deserving of admiration, occur to them at every moment, and with them, all those enthusiastic ideas of ancient genius and glory, which the study of so many years of youth so naturally leads them to form. Or, if the study of modern poetry has succeeded to that of the ancient, a thousand other beautiful associations are acquired, which, instead of destroying, serve easily to unite with the former, and to afford a new source of delight. The awful forms of Gothic superstition, the wild and romantic imagery, which the turbulence of the middle ages, the Crusades, and the institution of chivalry, have spread over every country of Europe, arise to the imagination in every scene; accompanied with all those pleasing recollections of prowess, and adventure, and courteous manners, which distinguished those memorable times. With such images in their minds, it is not common nature that appears to surround them. It is nature made sacred by the memory of Theocritus and Virgil, and Milton and Tasso; their genius seems still to linger among the scenes which inspired it, and to irradiate every object where it dwells; and the creations of their fancy seem the fit inhabitants of that nature, which their descriptions have clothed with beauty.

Nor is it only in providing so many sources of association, that the influence of an acquaintance with poetry consists. It is yet still more

powerful in giving *character* to the different appearances of nature; in connecting them with various emotions and affections of our hearts; and in thus providing an almost inexhaustible source either of solemn or cheerful meditation. What to ordinary men is but common occurrence, or common scenery, to those who have such associations, is full of beauty. The seasons of the year, which are marked only by the generality of mankind by the different occupations or amusements they bring, have each of them, to such men, peculiar expressions, and awaken them to an exercise either of pleasing or of awful thought. The seasons of the day, which are regarded only by the common spectator as the call to labour, or to rest, are to them characteristic either of cheerfulness or solemnity, and connected with all the various emotions which these characters excite. Even the familiar circumstances of general nature, which pass unheeded by a common eye, the cottage, the sheep-fold, the curfew, all have expressions to them, because, in the compositions to which they have been accustomed, these all are associated with peculiar characters, or rendered expressive of them, and, leading them to the remembrance of such associations, enable them to behold, with corresponding dispositions, the scenes which are before them, and to feel, from their prospect, the powerful influence, which poetry has ascribed to them.

Associations of this kind, when acquired in early life, are seldom altogether lost; and whatever inconveniences they may sometimes have with regard to the general character, or however much they may be ridiculed by those who do not experience them, they are yet productive, to those who possess them, of a perpetual and innocent delight. Nature herself is their friend; in her most dreadful, as well as her most lovely scenes, they can discover something either to elevate their imaginations, or to move their hearts; and amid every change of scenery, or of climate, can still find themselves among the early objects of their admiration, or their love.

Chapter II.—Analysis of this Exercise of Imagination.

Sec. I.—The illustrations in the preceding chapter seem to show, that whenever the emotions of sublimity or beauty are felt, that exercise of imagination is produced, which consists in the indulgence of a train of thought; that when this exercise is prevented, these emotions are unfelt or unperceived; and that whatever tends to increase this exercise of mind, tends in the same proportion to increase these emotions. If these illustrations are just, it seems reasonable to conclude, that the effect produced upon the mind, by objects of sublimity and beauty, consists in the production of this exercise of imagination.

Although, however, this conclusion seems to me both just and con-

sonant to experience, yet it is in itself too general, to be considered as a sufficient account of the nature of that operation of mind which takes place in the case of such emotions. There are many trains of ideas of which we are conscious, which are unattended with any kind of pleasure. There are other operations of mind, in which such trains of thought are necessarily produced, without exciting any similar emotion. Even in the common hours of life, every man is conscious of a succession of thoughts passing through his mind, suggested either by the presence of external objects, or arising from the established laws of association: such trains of thought, however, are seldom attended with pleasure, and still seldomer with an emotion, corresponding, in any degree, to the emotions of sublimity or beauty.

There are, in like manner, many cases where objects excite a train of thought in the mind, without exciting any emotion of pleasure or delight. The prospect of the house, for instance, where one has formerly lived, excites very naturally a train of conceptions in the mind; yet it is by no means true that such an exercise of imagination is necessarily accompanied with pleasure; for these conceptions not only may be, but very often are of a kind extremely indifferent, and sometimes also simply painful. The mention of an event in history, or of a fact in science, naturally leads us to the conception of a number of related events, or similar facts; yet it is obvious, that, in such a case, the exercise of mind which is produced, if it is accompanied with any pleasure at all, is in most cases accompanied with a pleasure very different from that attending the emotions of sublimity or beauty.

If therefore some train of thought, or some exercise of imagination is necessary for the production of the emotions of taste, it is obvious that this is not every train of thought of which we are capable. To ascertain, therefore, with any precision, either the nature or the causes of these emotions, it is previously necessary to investigate the nature of those trains of thought that are produced by objects of simplicity and beauty, and their difference from those ordinary trains, which are unaccompanied with such pleasure.

As far as I am able to judge, this difference consists in two things. 1, in the nature of the ideas or conceptions which compose such trains: 2, in the nature or law of their succession.

1. In our ordinary trains of thought, every man must be conscious that the ideas which compose them, are very frequently of a kind which excite no emotions either of pleasure or pain. There is an infinite variety of our ideas, as well as of our sensations, that may be termed indifferent, which are perceived without any sentiment either of pain or pleasure, and which pass as it were before the mind, without making any further impression than simply exciting the consciousness of their existence. That such ideas compose a great part, and perhaps the greatest part of our ordinary trains of thought, is apparent

from the single consideration, that such trains of thought are seldom attended with emotion of any kind.

The trains of thought which are suggested by external objects, are very frequently of a similar kind. The greater part of such objects are simply indifferent, or at least are regarded as indifferent in our common hours either of occupation or amusement: the conceptions which they produce, by the laws of association, partake of the nature or character of the object which originally excited them; and the whole train passes through our mind without leaving any further emotion, than perhaps that general emotion of pleasure which accompanies the exercise of our faculties. It is scarcely possible for us to pass an hour of our lives without experiencing some train of thought of this kind, suggested by some of the external objects which happen to surround us. The indifference with which such trains are either pursued or deserted, is a sufficient evidence, that the ideas of which they are composed, are in general of a kind unfitted to produce any emotion, either of pleasure or pain.

In the case of those trains of thought, on the contrary, which are suggested by objects either of sublimity or beauty, I apprehend it will be found, that they are in all cases composed of ideas capable of exciting some affection or emotion; and that not only the whole succession is accompanied with that peculiar emotion which we call the emotion of beauty or sublimity, but that every individual idea of such a succession is in itself productive of some simple emotion or other. Thus the ideas suggested by the scenery of spring, are ideas productive of emotions of cheerfulness, of gladness, and of tenderness. The images suggested by the prospect of ruins, are images belonging to pity, to melancholy, and to admiration. The ideas, in the same manner, awakened by the view of the ocean in a storm, are ideas of power, of majesty, and of terror. In every case where the emotions of taste are felt, I conceive it will be found, that the train of thought which is excited, is distinguished by some character or emotion, and that it is by this means distinguished from our common or ordinary successions of thought. To prevent a very tedious and unnecessary circumlocution, such ideas may perhaps, without any impropriety, be termed our ideas of emotion; and I shall beg leave therefore to use the expression in this sense.

The first circumstance, then, which seems to distinguish those trains of thought which are produced by objects either of sublimity or beauty, is, that the ideas or conceptions of which they are composed, are the ideas of emotion.

II. In our ordinary trains of thought, there seldom appears any general principle of connexion among the ideas which compose them. Each idea, indeed, is related, by an established law of our nature, to that which immediately preceded and that which immediately follows

it; but in the whole series there is no predominant relation or bond of connexion. This want of general connexion is so strong, that even that most general of all relations, the relation either of pleasure or pain, is frequently violated. Images both of the one kind and the other succeed each other in the course of the train; and when we put an end to it, we are often at a loss to say, whether the whole series was pleasant or painful. Of this irregularity, I think every man will be convinced, who chooses to attend to it.

In those trains, on the contrary, which are suggested by objects of sublimity or beauty, however slight the connexion between individual thoughts may be, I believe it will be found, that there is always some general principle of connexion which pervades the whole, and gives them some certain and definite character. They are either gay, or pathetic, or melancholy, or solemn, or awful, or elevating, &c., according to the nature of the emotion which is first excited. Thus the prospect of a serene evening in summer, produces first an emotion of peacefulness and tranquillity, and then suggests a variety of images corresponding to this primary impression. The sight of a torrent, or of a storm, in the same manner, impresses us first with sentiments of awe, or solemnity, or terror, and then awakens in our minds a series of conceptions allied to this peculiar emotion. Whatever may be the character of the original emotion, the images which succeed seem all to have a relation to this character; and if we trace them back, we shall discover not only a connexion between the individual thoughts of the train, but also a general relation among the whole, and a conformity to that peculiar emotion which first excited them.

The train of thought, therefore, which takes place in the mind, upon the prospect of objects of sublimity and beauty, may be considered as consisting in a regular or consistent train of ideas of emotion, and as distinguished from our ordinary trains of thought; first, in respect of the nature of the ideas of which it is composed, by their being ideas productive of emotion; and secondly, in respect of their succession, by their being distinguished by some general principle of connexion, which subsists through the whole extent of the train.

The truth of the account which I have now given of the nature of that train of thought which attends the emotions of sublimity and beauty, must undoubtedly at last be determined by its conformity to general experience and observation. There are some considerations, however, of a very obvious and familiar kind, which it may be useful to suggest to the reader, for the purpose of affording him a method of investigating with accuracy the truth of this account.

If it is true that the ideas which compose that train of thought which attends the emotions of taste, are ideas of emotion, then it ought to *be found, that no objects* or qualities are experienced to be beautiful or *sublime, but such* as are productive of some simple emotion.

If it is true that such trains of thought are uniformly distinguished by a general principle of connexion, then it ought also to be found that no composition of objects or qualities produces such emotions, in which this unity of character or of emotion is not preserved.

I shall endeavour, at some length, to illustrate the truth of both these propositions.

SEC. II.—That no objects, or qualities in objects, are, in fact, felt either as beautiful or sublime, but such as are productive of some simple emotion, seems evident from the following familiar considerations.

I. Wherever the emotions of sublimity or beauty are felt, I believe it will be found, that some affection is uniformly excited by the presence of the object, before the more complex emotion of beauty is felt; and that if no such affection is excited, no emotion of beauty or sublimity is produced. The truth of this observation may be illustrated, both from common language, and common experience.

1. If any man were to assert, that some object, though positively indifferent or uninteresting, was yet beautiful or sublime, every one would consider it as asserting an absurdity. If, on the other hand, he were to assert, that the object had neither beauty nor sublimity to him, because there was no quality in it which could give him any emotion, I apprehend we should not only clearly understand his meaning, but very readily allow his reason; and if the object were such as appeared to us in the light either of sublimity or beauty, and we wished to make him sensible of it, the way that we should naturally take, would be to point out to him some affecting or interesting quality which we imagined he had overlooked, and which we felt was the foundation of our own emotion.

There is undoubtedly a very great difference between the emotion of taste, and any simple emotion, as of cheerfulness, tenderness, melancholy, solemnity, elevation, terror, &c., as such emotions are frequently felt without any sentiment of beauty or sublimity; but there is no case, I believe, where the emotions of taste are felt, without the previous production of some such simple emotion. It is often indeed difficult to say, what is the quality in the object which produces the emotion of beauty; and it is sometimes difficult, in the case of complex objects, when different qualities unite in the production of emotion, to define the exact nature of that emotion which we feel; but whether the general impression we receive, is that of gaiety, or tenderness, or melancholy, or solemnity, or elevation, or terror, &c., we have never any difficulty of determining; and so strong is our conviction of the dependence of the emotions of taste upon some such previous simple emotion, that *whenever* we endeavour to explain the beauty or sub-

limity of any object, we proceed by pointing out the interesting quality in it, which is fitted to produce this previous emotion. It is not only impossible for us to imagine an object of taste, that is not an object of emotion; but it is impossible to describe any such object, without resting the description upon that quality, or those qualities in it, which are productive of simple emotion.

2. Every man has had reason to observe a difference in his sentiments, with regard to the beauty of particular objects, from those of other people; either in his considering certain objects as beautiful, which did not appear so to them, or in their considering certain objects as beautiful which did not appear so to him. There is no instance of this more common than in the case of airs in music. In the first case of such a difference of opinion, we generally endeavour to recollect, whether there is not some accidental association of pleasure which we have with such objects, and which afford us that delight which other people do not share; and, it not unfrequently happens, that we assign such associations as the cause of our pleasure, and as our apology for differing from their opinion. In the other case, we generally take it for granted, that they who feel a beauty where we do not, have some pleasing association with the object in question, of which we are unconscious, and which is accordingly productive to them of that delight in which we are unable to share. In both cases, although we may not discover what the particular association is, we do not fail to suppose that some such association exists which is the foundation of the sentiment of beauty, and to consider this difference of opinion as sufficiently accounted for on such a supposition. This very natural kind of reasoning could not, I think, take place, if we did not find from experience, that those objects only are productive of the sentiment of beauty, which are capable of exciting emotion.

3. The different habits and occupations of life produce a similar effect on the sentiments of mankind with regard to the objects of taste, by their tendency to confine their sensibility to a certain class of objects, and to render all others indifferent to them. In our progress from infancy to manhood, how much do our sentiments of beauty change with our years! how often, in the course of this progress, do we look back with contempt, or at least with wonder, upon the tastes of our earlier days, and the objects that gratified them! and how uniformly, in all this progress, do our opinions of beauty coincide with the prevalent emotions of our hearts, and with that change of sensibility which the progress of life occasions! As soon as any class of objects loses its importance in our esteem, as soon as their presence ceases to bring us pleasure, or their absence to give us pain, the beauty in which our infant imagination arrayed them disappears, and begins to irradiate another class of objects, which we are willing to flatter ourselves are more deserving of such sentiments, but which have often

no other value, than in their coincidence with those new emotions that begin to swell in our breasts. The little circle of infant beauty, contains no other objects than those that can excite the affections of the child. The wider range which youth discovers, is still limited by the same boundaries which nature has prescribed to the affections of youth. It is only when we arrive at manhood, and still more, when either the liberality of our education, or the original capacity of our minds, have led us to experience or to participate in all the affections of our nature, that we acquire that comprehensive taste, which can enable us to discover, and to relish, every species of sublimity and of beauty.

It is easily observable, also, that besides the natural progress of life, the habits of thought which men acquire from the diversity of their occupations, tend in the same proportion to limit their sense of beauty or sublimity, as they limit their emotions to a particular character or kind. The lover reads or hears, with indifference, of all that is most sublime in the history of ambition, and wonders only at the folly of mankind, who can sacrifice their ease, their comforts, and all the best pleasures of life, to the unsubstantial pursuit of power. The man, whose life has been passed in the pursuits of commerce, and who has learned to estimate everything by its value in money, laughs at the labours of the philosopher or the poet, and beholds with indifference the most splendid pursuits of life, if they are not repaid by wealth. The anecdote of a late celebrated mathematician is well known, who read the Paradise Lost, without being able to discover in it anything that was sublime, but who said that he could never read the queries at the end of Newton's Optics, without feeling his hair stand on end, and his blood run cold. There are thousands who have read the old ballad of Chevy Chase, without having their imaginations inflamed with the ideas of military glory. It is the brave only, who, in the perusal of it, like the gallant Sir Philip Sidney, feel 'their hearts moved as by the sound of a trumpet.'

The effect of such habits of mind upon the sense of beauty, may, in some degree, be observed in all the different classes of mankind; and there are probably few men, who have not had occasion to remark how much the diversity of tastes corresponds to the diversity of occupations, and, even in the most trifling things, how strongly the sentiments of beauty, in different men, are expressive of their prevailing habits, or turn of mind. It is only in the higher stations, accordingly, or in the liberal professions of life, that we expect to find men either of a delicate or comprehensive taste. The inferior situations of life, by contracting the knowledge and the affections of men within very narrow limits, produce insensibly a similar contraction in their notions of the beautiful or the sublime. The finest natural taste is seldom found able to withstand that narrowness and insensi-

bility of mind, which is perhaps necessarily acquired by the minute and uninteresting details of the mechanical arts ; and they who have been doomed, by their professions, to pass their earlier years in populous and commercial cities, and in the narrow and selfish pursuits which prevail there, soon lose that sensibility which is the most natural of all,—the sensibility to the beauties of the country; because they lose all those sentiments of tenderness and innocence, which are the foundation of much the greater part of the associations we connect with the scenery of nature.

4. The difference of original character, or the natural tendency of our minds to particular kinds of emotion, produces a similar difference in our sentiments of beauty, and serves, in a very obvious manner, to limit our taste to a certain class or character of objects. There are men, for instance, who, in all the varieties of external nature, find nothing beautiful but as it tends to awaken in them a sentiment of sadness; who meet the return of spring with minds only prophetic of its decay; and who follow the decline of autumn with no other remembrance than that the beauties of the year are gone. There are men, on the contrary, to whom every appearance of nature is beautiful, as awakening a sentiment of gaiety ;—to whom spring and autumn alike are welcome, because they bring to them only different images of joy;—and who, even in the most desolate and wintry scenes, are yet able to discover something in which their hearts may rejoice. It is not, surely, that nature herself is different, that so different effects are produced upon the imaginations of these men ; but it is because the original constitution of their minds has led them to different habits of emotion,—because their imaginations seize only those expressions in nature which are allied to their prevailing dispositions,—and because every other appearance is indifferent to them, but those which fall in with the peculiar sensibility of their hearts. The gaiety of nature alone, is beautiful to the cheerful man; its melancholy, to the man of sadness ; because these alone are the qualities which accord with the emotions they are accustomed to cherish, and in which their imaginations delight to indulge.

The same observation is equally applicable to the different tastes of men in poetry, and the rest of the fine arts; and the productions that all men peculiarly admire, are those which suit that peculiar strain of emotion, to which, from their original constitution, they are most strongly disposed. The ardent and gallant mind sickens at the insipidity of pastoral, and the languor of elegiac poetry, and delights only in the great interests of the tragic and the epic muse. The tender and romantic peruse, with indifference, the Iliad and the *Paradise Lost*, and return with gladness to those favoured compositions, which are descriptive of the joys or sorrows of love. The gay and the frivolous, on the contrary, alike insensible to the sentiments either of

tenderness or magnanimity, find their delight in that cold but lively style of poetry, which has been produced by the gallantry of modern times, and which, in its principal features, is so strongly characteristic of the passion itself. In general, those kinds of poetry only are delightful, or awaken us to any very sensible emotions of sublimity or beauty, which fall in with our peculiar habits of sentiment or feeling; and if it rarely happens, that one species of poetry is relished to the exclusion of every other, it arises only from this, that it is equally rare, that one species of emotion should have so completely the dominion of the heart, as to exclude all emotions of any other kind. In proportion, however, as our sensibility is weak, with regard to any class of objects, it is observable, that our sense of sublimity or beauty in such objects, is weak in the same proportion; and wherever it happens (for it does happen) that men, from their original constitution, are incapable of any one species of emotion, I believe it will also be found, that they are equally insensible to all the sublimity or beauty which the rest of the world find in the objects of such emotion.

5. Besides the influence of permanent habits of thought, or of the diversities of original disposition upon our sentiments of beauty, every man must have had occasion to observe, that the perception of beauty depends also on the temporary sensibility of his mind; and that even objects of the most experienced beauty fail in exciting their usual delight, when they occur to him in moments when he is under the dominion of different emotions from those with which he usually regards them. In our seasons of gaiety we behold with indifference the same objects which delight our imaginations when we are under the impressions of tenderness or melancholy. In our seasons of despondence we turn, with some kind of aversion, from the objects or the reflexions that enchant us in our hours of gaiety. In the common hours of life, in the same manner, when we are either busy or unoccupied, and when our minds are free from every kind of sensibility, the objects of taste make but a feeble impression upon us; and are either altogether neglected, or tacitly reserved to another time, when we may be more in the temper to enjoy them. The husbandman who goes out to observe the state of his grounds, the man of business who walks forth to ruminate about his affairs, or the philosopher to reason or reflect, whatever their natural sensibilities may be, are, at such times, insensible to every beauty that the scenery of Nature may exhibit; nor do they begin to feel them, until they withdraw their attention from the particular objects of their thought, and abandon themselves to the emotions which such scenes may happen to inspire.

There are even moments of listlessness and languor, in which no objects of taste whatever can excite their usual delight, in which our favourite landscapes, our favourite airs, cease altogether to affect us; and *when sometimes* we almost wonder what is the secret spell that

hangs over our minds, and prevents us from enjoying the pleasures that are within our reach. It is not that the objects of such pleasures are changed; it is not even that we have not the wish to enjoy them —for this we frequently attempt, and attempt in vain; but it is because we come to them either with minds fatigued, and with spirits below their usual tone, or under the influence of other feelings than are necessary for their enjoyment. Whenever we return to the state of mind favourable to such emotions, our delight returns with it, and the objects of such pleasures become as favourite as before.

II.—It is further observable, that our sense of the beauty or sublimity of every object depends upon that quality, or those qualities of it which we consider; and that objects of the most acknowledged beauty cease to affect us with such emotions, when we make any of their indifferent or uninteresting qualities the object of our consideration. There is no production of taste whatever, which has not many qualities of a very indifferent kind; and there can be no doubt both that we have it in our power to make any of these qualities the object of our attention, and that we very often do so, without regarding any of those qualities of emotion, upon which its beauty or its sublimity is founded. In such cases, I believe every one has felt that the effect upon his mind corresponds to the quality he considers.

1. It is difficult, for instance, to enumerate the various qualities which may produce the emotion of beauty, in the statues of the Venus de Medicis, or the Apollo Belvidere; yet it is undoubtedly possible for any man to see these masterpieces of statuary, and yet feel no emotion of beauty. The delicacy, the modesty, the timidity of the one—the grace, the dignity, the majesty of the other—and, in both, the inimitable art with which these characters are expressed, are, in general, the qualities which first impress themselves upon the imagination of the spectator; yet the man of the best taste may afterwards see them, without thinking of any such expressions. He may observe their dimensions, he may study their proportions, he may attend to the particular state of their preservation, the history of their discovery, or even the nature of the marble of which they are made. All these are as truly qualities of these statues, as their majesty or their grace, and may certainly, at particular times, happen to engage the attention of the man of the most refined taste. That, in such cases, no emotion of beauty would be felt, and that, before it could be felt, it would be necessary for the spectator to withdraw his mind from the consideration of such unaffecting qualities, is too obvious to require any illustration from us.

The same observation is applicable to every other production of *taste* There is no poem, no painting, no musical composition, how*ever beautiful* or sublime, that has not many qualities or attributes, *that are altogether* uninteresting, and which may not be made the

object of attention at particular times, although in general they are left out of consideration. The inversions of Milton, the compound epithets of Thomson, are as really qualities of their compositions, as the sublimity of the one, or the tenderness of the other. The person who should make such qualities alone the object of his attention, in the perusal of the Seasons, or the Paradise Lost, though he might certainly receive some instruction, would doubtless receive little delight; and if he were really capable of feeling the sublimity or beauty which distinguish these compositions, it must be to other and more affecting qualities of them that he must turn his regard. While these minute and unaffecting circumstances were the objects of his attention, he could be conscious of no greater emotion than what he might receive from the perusal of the most unanimated prose. It is in consequence of this, that the exercise of criticism never fails to destroy, for the time, our sensibility to the beauty of every composition, and that habits of this kind so generally end in destroying the sensibility of taste. They accustom us to consider every composition in relation only to rules; they turn our attention from those qualities upon which their effect is founded as objects of taste, to the consideration of the principles by which this effect is attained; and instead of that deep and enthusiastic delight which the perception of beauty or sublimity bestows, they afford us at least no higher enjoyment, than what arises from the observation of the servile dexterity of art.

2. The effect of familiarity, which has so often been observed, in diminishing our sensibility to the objects of taste, may serve also as an illustration of the same principle. This effect indeed is generally resolved into the influence of habit, which in this, as in every other case, is supposed to diminish the strength of our emotions; yet, that it is not solely to be ascribed to habit, seems evident from the following consideration, that such indifference is never permanent, and that there are times when the most familiar objects awaken us to the fullest sense of their beauty. The necessity which we are under of considering all such objects when familiar, in very different aspects from those in which they appear to us as objects of beauty, and of attending only to their unaffecting qualities, may better account both for this gradual decay of our sensibility, and for its temporary returns.

When a man of any taste, for instance, first settles in a romantic country, he is willing to flatter himself that he can never be satiated with its beauties, and that in their contemplation he shall continue to receive the same exquisite delight. The aspect in which he now sees them, is solely that in which they are calculated to produce emotion. The streams are known to him only by their gentleness or their majesty, the woods by their solemnity, the rocks by their awfulness or terror. In a very short time, however, he is forced to consider them in very different lights. They are useful to him for some purposes, either of

occupation or amusement. They serve as distinctions of different properties, or of different divisions of the country. They become boundaries or land-marks, by which his knowledge of the neighbourhood is ascertained. It is with these qualities that he hears them usually spoken of by all who surround him. It is in this light that he must often speak and think of them himself. It is with these qualities, accordingly, that he comes at last insensibly to consider them, in the common hours of his life. Even a circumstance so trifling as the assignation of particular names, contributes in a great degree to produce this effect; because the use of such names, in marking the particular situation or place of such objects, naturally leads him to consider the objects themselves in no other light than that of their place or situation. It is with very different feelings that he must now regard the objects that were once so full of beauty. They now occur to his mind, only as topographical distinctions, and are beheld with the indifference such qualities naturally produce. Their majesty, their solemnity, their terror, &c., are gradually obscured, under the mass of unaffecting qualities with which he is obliged to consider them: and, excepting at those times when either their appearances or their expressions are new, or when some other incident has awakened that tone or temper of thought with which their expressions agree, and when, of consequence, he is disposed to consider them in the light of this expression alone, he must be content at last to pass his life without any perception of their beauty.

It is on the same account that the great and the opulent, become gradually so indifferent to those articles of elegance or magnificence with which they are surrounded, and which are so effectual in exciting the admiration of other men. The man of inferior rank, whose situation prevents him from all familiarity with such objects, sees them in the light of their magnificence and elegance alone; he sees them, too, as signs of that happiness and refined pleasure, which men in his condition so usually and so falsely attributed to those of elevated rank; and he feels accordingly all that unmingled emotion of admiration which such expressions are fitted to produce. But the possessor must often see them in different lights. Whatever may be their elegance or their beauty, they still serve some end, or answer some purpose of his establishment. They are destined to some particular use, or are ornaments of some particular place: they are articles in the furniture of such a room, or ingredients in the composition of such a scene: they were designed by such an artist, executed after such a model, or cost such a sum of money. In such, or in some other equally uninteresting light, he must frequently be obliged both to speak and to *think of* them. In proportion as the habit of considering them in *such a light* increases, his disposition, or his opportunity to consider *them as objects of taste*, diminishes. Their elegance or their magnifi-

cence gradually disappears, until at last he comes to regard them (excepting at particular times) with no farther emotion, than what he receives from the common furniture of his house. The application of the same observation to many more important sources of our happiness, is too obvious to require any illustration.

There is no man, in like manner, acquainted with the history or the literature of antiquity, who has not felt his imagination inflamed by the most trifling circumstances connected with such periods. The names of the Ilyssus, the Tiber, the Forum, the Capitol, &c., have a kind of established grandeur in our apprehensions, because the only light in which we regard them, is that of their relation to those past scenes of greatness. No man, however, is weak enough to believe, that to the citizen of Athens, or of Rome, such names were productive of similar emotions. To him they undoubtedly conveyed no other ideas than those of the particular divisions of the city in which he dwelt, and were heard, of consequence, with the same indifference that the citizen of London hears of the Strand, or the Tower.

3. The influence of fashion, in producing so frequent revolutions in the sentiments of men, with regard to the beauty of those objects to which it extends, and in disposing us to neglect or to despise at one time, the objects which we considered as beautiful before, may perhaps be explained upon the same principle. Fashion may be considered in general as the custom of the great. It is the dress, the furniture, the language, the manners of the great world which constitute what is called the fashion in each of these articles, and which the rest of mankind are in such haste to adopt, after their example. Whatever the real beauty or propriety of these articles may be, it is not in this light that we consider them. They are the signs of that elegance and taste, and splendour, which is so liberally attributed to elevated rank; they are associated with the consequence which such situations bestow; and they establish a kind of external distinction between this envied station, and those humble and mortifying conditions of life, to which no man is willing to belong. It is in the light therefore of this connection only, that we are disposed to consider them; and they accordingly affect us with the same emotion of delight, which we receive from the consideration of taste or elegance in more permanent instances. As soon, however, as this association is destroyed, as soon as the caprice or the inconstancy of the great have introduced other usages in their place, our opinion of their beauty is immediately destroyed. The quality which was formerly so pleasing or so interesting in them, the quality which alone we considered, is now appropriated to other objects; and our admiration readily transfers itself to those newer forms, which have risen into distinction from the same cause. The forsaken fashion, whatever may be its real or intrinsic beauty, falls, *for the present at least*, into neglect or contempt; because, either

our admiration of it was founded only upon that quality which it has lost, or because it has now descended to the inferior ranks, and is of consequence associated with ideas of meanness and vulgarity. A few years bring round again the same fashion. The same association attends it, and our admiration is renewed as before. It is on the same account, that they who are most liable to the seduction of fashion, are people on whose minds the slighter associations have a strong effect. A plain man is incapable of such associations; a man of sense is above them: but the young and the frivolous, whose principles of taste are either unformed, or whose minds are unable to maintain any settled opinions, are apt to lose sight of every other quality in such objects but their relation to the practice of the great, and of course, to suffer their sentiments of beauty to vary with the caprice of this practice. It is the same cause which attaches the old to the fashions of their youth. They are associated with the memory of their better days, with a thousand recollections of happiness and gaiety, and hearfelt pleasures, which they experience now no more. The fashions of modern times have no such pleasing associations to them. They are connected to them, only with ideas of thoughtless gaiety, or childish caprice. It is the fashions of their youth alone, therefore, that they consider as beautiful.

III. It may further be observed, that the dependence of taste upon sensibility, or the necessity of some simple emotion being excited, before the beauty or sublimity of any object is perceived, is so far from being remote from general observation, that it is the foundation of some of the most common judgments we form with regard to the characters of men.

1. When we are but slightly acquainted with any person, and have had no opportunities of knowing the particular nature of his sentiments or turn of mind, we never venture to pronounce, or even to guess with regard to his taste; and if, in such a stage of our acquaintance, we find that his opinions of beauty are very different from our own, we are so far from being surprised at it, that we set ourselves very deliberately to account for it, either by recalling to mind those habits or occupations of his life which may have led him to different kinds of emotion, or by supposing that his natural sensibility is very different from our own. On the other hand, when we are well acquainted with any person, and know intimately the particular turn or sensibility of his mind, although we should never have happened to know his sentiments of sublimity or beauty, we yet venture very boldly to pronounce, whether any particular class of objects will affect him with such sentiments or not. The foundation of our judgment, in such cases, is the agreement or disagreement of such objects, with the particular turn or *character* of his affections; and if we are well acquainted with the *person, our judgment* is seldom wrong. In the same manner, although

we are altogether unacquainted with any person, yet if we are informed of his particular taste, or of his favourite objects of beauty or sublimity, we not only feel ourselves disposed to conclude from thence, with regard to his particular turn or character of mind, but, if the instances are sufficiently numerous, we in general conclude right. It is scarcely possible for any man to read the works of a poet, without forming some judgment of his character and affections as a man; or without concluding, that the magnanimity, the tenderness, the gaiety, or the melancholy, which distinguish him in private life, will characterize the scenes or descriptions of his works. I am far from contending, that such judgments, in general, are just; not only from the rashness with which they so commonly are formed, but still more in those cases where we reason from any person's taste, from the impossibility of knowing whether this taste is genuine, or whether it is founded upon some accidental associations. All that I mean to conclude is, that such judgments are a proof of the connection between taste and sensibility; and that they could not be formed, unless we found from experience, that no qualities affect us with the pleasures of taste, but such as are productive of some simple emotion.

2. It is further to be observed, that the sense of the dependence of the emotions of sublimity or beauty, upon the accidental or temporary disposition of the mind, is also very strongly expressed, both in common conduct and in common conversation. To a man under some present impression of joy, we should not venture to appeal with regard to the beauty of any melancholy or pathetic composition. To a man under the dominion of sorrow, we should much less presume to present even the most beautiful composition, which contained only images of joy. In both cases, we should feel, that the compositions in question demanded different emotions from those that the persons had in their power to bestow; that while their present dispositions continued, there was no chance of the composition's being interesting to them: and if we really wished to know their opinions, we would wait till we found them in such a disposition as was favourable to the emotions to which either of the compositions was addressed.

When any poem, or painting, or scene in nature peculiarly affects us, we are generally in haste to show it to some friend, whose taste we know is similar to our own; and our minds are not fully satiated with its beauties, until we are able to unite with our own peculiar emotion, that pleasing surprise which we participate with one to whom it is new, and that sentiment of gladness which it is so natural to feel, when we find that we have been able to communicate delight. It sometimes happens, however, that the person to whom we show it does not feel the pleasure we expected. In such a case, though we are a little surprised, we are not much disappointed. We tell him, that he happens *not to be in the humour* to be pleased; that at another time

we are sure he will feel its beauty; and though we should not happen to know what is the peculiar cause of his indifference, we yet satisfy ourselves, that there is some cause which prevents him from the indulgence of the particular emotion which the scene or the composition demands, and which we know he is in general disposed to indulge. It happens, accordingly, if we are really well acquainted with the person, and if this beauty is not founded upon some particular association of our own, that our expectation is gratified, and that, when he returns to his ordinary temper of mind, he becomes sensible to all the beauty or sublimity which we had found in it. Many other instances of the same kind might be produced. In all cases, I think, where we discover in other people a weaker sense with regard to the beauty of particular objects than in ourselves, and when we can recollect no accidental association which may account for the superiority of our own emotion, we are naturally inclined to attribute it either to some temporary occupation or embarrassment of their minds when such objects were presented to them; or, if we find that this was not the case, to some original deficiency in the sensibility of their hearts. To say that a man has no feelings of tenderness or magnanimity, accounts to us at once for his want of sensibility to the beauty of any actions or species of composition, which are founded on such emotions. In the same manner, to say that at any particular time he was under the dominion of opposite feelings, as fully accounts to us for his insensibility, at such a time, to the beauty of such actions or compositions. I apprehend, that these very natural and very common judgments could not be formed, unless we found from experience, that those qualities only are felt as beautiful or sublime, which are found to produce emotion.

IV.—The proposition which I have now endeavoured to illustrate, might be illustrated from a variety of other considerations, and particularly from the nature of the fine arts. The objects of these arts is to produce the emotions of taste; and it might easily be shown,

1. That the only subjects that are in themselves proper for the imitation of these arts are such as are productive of some species of simple emotion.

2. That when these subjects are of a contrary kind the method by which alone they can be rendered either beautiful or sublime is by the addition of some interesting or affecting quality.

3. That the extent, as well as the power of the different fine arts, in producing such emotions, is in proportion to the capacity which they afford the artist of making such additions; and that, in this respect, poetry, by employing the instrument of language, by means of which *it can express* every quality of mind as well as of body, has a decided *superiority over the* rest of those arts which are limited to the expres*sion of the qualities* of body alone.

These considerations, however, besides their being familiar to those who have reflected upon these subjects, would necessarily lead to discussions far beyond the limits of these essays. The reader, who would wish to see some of these principles illustrated, will find it very fully and very beautifully done in Dr. Beattie's essays upon poetry and music.

If the preceding illustrations are just; if it is found that no qualities are felt, either as beautiful or sublime, but such as accord with the habitual or temporary sensibility of our minds; that objects of the most acknowledged beauty fail to excite their usual emotions, when we regard them in the light of any of their uninteresting or unaffecting qualities; and that our common judgments of the characters of men are founded upon this experience,—it seems that there can be no doubt of the truth of the proposition itself.

SEC. III.—If it is true that those trains of thought which attend the emotions of taste are uniformly distinguished by some general principle of connexion, it ought to be found that no composition of objects or qualities in fact produces such emotions, in which this unity of character or of emotion is not preserved. This proposition also may be illustrated from the most superficial review of the principles of composition in the different arts of taste.

I.—There is no man of common taste who has not often lamented that confusion of expression which so frequently takes place, even in the most beautiful scenes of real nature, and which prevents him from indulging to the full the peculiar emotion which the scene itself is fitted to inspire. The cheerfulness of the morning is often disturbed by circumstances of minute or laborious occupation,—the solemnity of noon by noise and bustling industry,—the tranquility and melancholy of evening by vivacity and vulgar gaiety. It is seldom even that any unity of character is preserved among the inanimate objects of such scenery. The sublimest situations are often disfigured by objects that we feel unworthy of them,—by the traces of cultivation, or attempts towards improvement,—by the poverty of their woods, or of their streams, or some other of their great constituent features,—by appearances of uniformity or regularity, that almost induce the idea of art. The loveliest scenes, in the same manner, are frequently disturbed by unaccording circumstances;—by the signs of cultivation—the regularity of enclosures—the traces of manufactures, and, what is worse than all, by the presumptuous embellishments of fantastic taste. Amid this confusion of incidents the general character of the scene is altogether lost; we scarcely know to what class of objects to give our attention; and having viewed it with astonishment rather than with delight, we at last busy ourselves in imaginary improvements, and in

conceiving what its beauty might be, if every feature were removed which serves to interrupt its expression and diminish its effect.

What we thus attempt in imagination, it is the business of the art of Gardening to execute; and the great source of the superiority of its productions to the original scenes in nature, consists in the purity and harmony of its composition, in the power which the artist enjoys, to remove from his landscape whatever is hostile to its effect or unsuited to its character, and, by selecting only such circumstances as accord with the general expression of the scene, to awaken an emotion more full, more simple, and more harmonious than any which we can receive from the scenes of nature itself.

It is by this rule, accordingly, that the excellence of all such compositions is determined. In real nature, we often forgive, or are willing to forget slight inaccuracies or trifling inconsistencies; but in such productions of design, we expect and require more perfect correspondence. Every object that is not suited to the character of the scene, or that has not an effect in strengthening the expression by which it is distinguished, we condemn as an intrusion, and consider as a reproach upon the taste of the artist. When this expectation, on the contrary, is fully gratified; when the circumstances of the scenery are all such as accord with the peculiar emotion which the scene is fitted to inspire; when the hand of the artist disappears, and the embellishments of his fancy press themselves upon our belief, as the voluntary profusion of nature, we immediately pronounce that the composition is perfect; we acknowledge that he has attained the end of his art; and, in yielding ourselves up to the emotion which his composition demands, we afford him the most convincing mark of our applause. In the power which the art of gardening thus possesses, in common with the other fine arts, of withdrawing from its imitations whatever is inconsistent with their expression, and of adding whatever may contribute to strengthen, or to extend their effect, consists the great superiority which it possesses over the originals from which they are copied.

II. The art of landscape-painting is yet superior in its effect, from the capacity which the artist enjoys, of giving both greater extent and greater unity to his composition. In the art of gardening, the great materials of the scene are provided by nature, and the artist must satisfy himself with that degree of expression which she has bestowed. In a landscape, on the contrary, the painter has the choice of the circumstances he is to represent, and can give whatever force or extent he pleases to the expression he wishes to convey. In gardening, the materials of the scene are few, and those few unwieldy; and the artist *must* often content himself with the reflection, that he has given the *best disposition in his* power to the scanty and intractable materials *of nature.* In a landscape, on the contrary, the whole range of scenery

is before the eye of the painter. He may select from a thousand scenes, the circumstances which are to characterise a single composition, and may unite into one expression, the scattered features with which nature has feebly marked a thousand situations. The momentary effects of light or shade, the fortunate incidents which chance sometimes throws in, to improve the expression of real scenery, and which can never again be recalled, he has it in his power to perpetuate upon his canvas: above all, the occupations of men, so important in determining, or in heightening the characters of nature, and which are seldom compatible with the scenes of gardening, fall easily within the reach of imitation, and afford him the means of producing greater strength, and greater unity of expression, than is to be found either in the rude, or in the embellished state of real scenery.

While it is by the invention of such circumstances that we estimate the genius of the artist, it is by their composition that his taste is uniformly determined. The mere assemblage of picturesque incidents, the most unimproved taste will condemn. Some general principle is universally demanded, some decided expression, to which the meaning of the several parts may be referred; and which, by affording us, as it were, the key of the scene, may lead us to feel, from the whole of the composition, that full and undisturbed emotion which we are prepared to indulge. It is this purity and simplicity of composition, accordingly, which has uniformly distinguished the great masters of the art from the mere copiers of nature. It is by their adherence to it, that their fame has been attained; and the names of Salvator and Claude Lorraine can scarcely be mentioned, without bringing to mind the peculiar character of their compositions, and the different emotions which their representations of nature produce.

It is not, however, on our first acquaintance with this art, that we either discover its capacity, or feel its effects; and perhaps the progress of taste, in this respect, may afford a further illustration of the great and fundamental principle of composition. What we first understand of painting is, that it is a simple art of imitation; and what we expect to find in it, is the representation of the common scenes of nature that surround us. It is with some degree of surprise, accordingly, that we at first observe the different scenery with which the painter presents us, and with an emotion rather of wonder, than of delight, that we gaze at a style of landscape, which has so little resemblance to the ordinary views to which we are accustomed. In the copy of a real scene, we can discover and admire the skill of the artist; but in the representation of desert or of desolate prospects, in appearances of solitude or tempest, we perceive no traces of imitation, and wonder only at the perversity of taste, which could have led the artist to the choice of such disagreeable subjects.

As soon however as, from the progress of our own sensibility, or

from our acquaintance with poetical composition, we begin to connect expression with such views of nature, we begin also to understand and to feel the beauties of landscape-painting. It is with a different view that we now consider it. It is not for imitation we look, but for character. It is not the art, but the genius of the painter, which now gives value to his compositions: and the language he employs is found not only to speak to the eye, but to affect the imagination and the heart. It is not now a simple copy which we see, nor is our emotion limited to the cold pleasure which arises from the perception of accurate imitation. It is a creation of fancy with which the artist presents us, in which only the greater expressions of nature are retained, and where more interesting emotions are awakened, than those which we experience from the usual tameness of common scenery. In the same proportion in which we thus discover the expression of landscape, we begin to collect the principles of its composition. The crowd of incidents which used to dazzle our earlier taste, as expressive both of the skill and of the invention of the artist, begin to appear to us as inconsistence or confusion. When our hearts are affected, we seek only for objects congenial to our emotion; and the simplicity, which we used to call the poverty of landscape, begins now to be welcome to us, as permitting us to indulge, without interruption, those interesting trains of thought which the character of the scene is fitted to inspire. As our knowledge of the expressions of nature increases, our sensibility to the beauty or to the defects of composition becomes more keen, until at last our admiration attaches itself only to those greater productions of the art, in which one pure and unmingled character is preserved, and in which no feature is admitted, which may prevent it from falling upon the heart with one full and harmonious effect.

In this manner, the object of painting is no sooner discovered, than the unity of expression is felt to be the great secret of its power: the superiority which it at last assumes over the scenery of nature, is found to arise, in one important respect, from the greater purity and simplicity which its composition can attain; and perhaps this simple rule comprehends all that criticism can prescribe for the regulation of this delightful art.

III.—But whatever may be the superiority of painting to the originals from which it is copied, it is still limited, in comparison of that which poetry enjoys. The painter addresses himself to the eye. The poet speaks to the imagination. The painter can represent no other qualities of nature, but those which we discern by the sense of sight. The poet can blend with those, all the qualities which we perceive by means of our other senses. The painter can seize only one moment of existence, and can represent no other qualities of objects than what *this single moment* affords. The whole history of nature is within the *reach of the poet*—the varying appearances which its different produc-

tions assume in the progress of their growth and decay, and the powerful effects which are produced by the contrast of these different aspects or expressions. The painter can give to the objects of his scenery only the visible and material qualities which are discerned by the eye, and must leave the interpretation of their expression to the imagination of the spectator; but the poet can give direct expression to whatever he describes. All the sublimity and beauty of the moral and intellectual world are at his disposal; and, by bestowing on the inanimate objects of his scenery the characters and affections of mind, he can produce at once an expression which every capacity may understand, and every heart may feel. Whatever may be the advantage which painting enjoys from the greater clearness and precision of its images, it is much more than balanced by the unbounded powers which the instrument of language affords to the poet, both in the selection of the objects of his description, and in the decision of the expression he can give them.

It is, accordingly, by the preservation of unity of character or expression, that the excellence of poetical description is determined; and perhaps the superior advantages which the poet enjoys, in the choice of his materials, renders our demand for its observance more rigid, than in any of the other arts of taste. In real nature, we willingly accommodate ourselves to the ordinary defects of scenery, and accept with gratitude those singular aspects in which some predominant character is tolerably preserved. In the compositions of gardening we make allowances for the narrow limits within which the invention of the artist is confined, and are dissatisfied only when great inconsistencies are retained. Even in painting, we are still mindful that it is the objects only of one sense that the artist can represent; and rather lament his restraints than condemn his taste, if our minds are not fully impressed with the emotions he studies to raise,—or if the different incidents of his composition do not fully accord in the degree as well as in the nature of their expression. But the descriptions of the poet can claim no such indulgence. With the capacity of blending in his composition the objects of every sense—with the past and the future, as well as the present, in his power—above all, with the mighty spell of mind at his command, with which he can raise every object that he touches into life and sentiment—we feel that he is unworthy of his art, if our imaginations are not satiated with his composition, and if in the chastity, as well as the power of his expression, he has not gratified the demand of our hearts.

It would be an unpleasing, and indeed an unnecessary task, to illustrate this observation by the defects or absurdities of poets of inferior genius or imperfect taste. It will perhaps be more useful, to produce a few instances of description from some of the greatest poets, in which *very trifling circumstances* serve to destroy, or at least to

diminish their effect, when they do not fully coincide with the nature of the emotion which the descriptions are intended to raise.

In that fine passage in the second book of the Georgics, in which Virgil celebrates the praises of his native country, after these few lines,

Hic ver assiduum, atque, alienis mensibus æstas;
Bis gravidæ pecudes, bis pomis utilis arbor.
At rabidæ tigres absunt, et sæva leonum
Semina; nec miseros fallunt aconita legentis;
Nec rapit immensos orbis per humum, neque tanto
Squameus in spiram tractu se colligit anguis—

there is no reader whose enthusiam is not checked by the cold and prosaic line which follows—

Adde tot egregias urbis, operumque laborem.

The tameness and vulgarity of the transition dissipates at once the emotion we had shared with the poet, and reduces him, in our opinion, to the level of a mere describer.

The effect of the following nervous and beautiful lines in the conclusion of the same book, is nearly destroyed by a similar defect. After these lines,

Hanc olim veteres vitam coluere Sabini;
Hanc Remus et frater: sic fortis Etruria crevit;
Scilicet et rerum facta est pulcherrima Roma—

we little expect the following spiritless conclusion—

Septemque una sibi muro circumdedit arces.

There is a still more surprising instance of this fault in one of the most pathetic passages of the whole poem, in the description of the disease among the cattle, which concludes the third Georgic. The passage is as follows—

Ecce autem, duro fumans sub vomere, taurus
Concidit, et *mixtum spumis vomit ore cruorem*,
Extremosque ciet gemitus; it tristis arator,
Mœrentem abjungens fraternâ morte juvencum
Atque opere in medio defixa relinquit aratra.

The unhappy image in the second line is less calculated to excite compassion than disgust, and is singularly ill-suited to that tone of tenderness and delicacy which the poet has everywhere else so successfully maintained, in describing the progress of this loathsome disease.

In the speech of Agamemnon to Idomeneus, in the fourth book of the Iliad, a circumstance is introduced altogether inconsistent both with the dignity of the speech, and the majesty of epic poetry—

Divine Idomeneus! what thanks we owe
To worth like thine, what praise shall we bestow!
To Thee the foremost honours are decreed,

First in the fight, and every graceful deed:
For this, in banquets, when the generous bowls
Restore our blood, and raise the warriors' souls,
Though all the rest with stated rules be bound,
Unmix'd, unmeasur'd are thy goblets crown'd.

Instances of the same defect may be found in the comparison of the sudden cure of Mar's wound to the coagulation of curds,—in that of Ajax retreating before the Trojans, to an ass driven by boys from a field of corn,—in the comparison of an obstinate combat between the Greeks and the Trojans, to the stubborn struggle between two peasants about the limits of their respective grounds,—in that of Ajax flying from ship to ship to encounter the Trojans, to a horseman riding several horses at once, and showing to the spectators his dexterity by vaulting from one to another.

There is a similar fault in the two following passages from Milton, where the introduction of trifling and ludicrous circumstances diminishes the beauty of the one, and the sublimity of the other.

Now Morn her rosy steps in the eastern clime
Advancing, sow'd the earth with orient pearl,
When Adam wak'd: *so custom'd, for his sleep*
Was airy light, from pure digestion bred,
And temp'rate vapours bland, which th' only sound
Of leaves, and fuming rills, Aurora's fan
Lightly dispers'd, and the shrill matin song
Of birds on every bough. —*Book* v.

They ended parle, and both address'd for fight
Unspeakable: for who, though with the tongue
Of angels, can relate, or to what things
Liken on earth conspicuous, that may lift
Human imagination to such height
Of godlike power? for likest gods they seem'd:
Stood they or mov'd, in stature, motion, arms,
Fit to decide the empire of great Heaven.
Now wav'd their fiery swords, and in the air
Made horrid circles: two broad suns their shields,
Blaz'd opposite, while expectation stood
In horror; *from each hand with speed retir'd*
Where erst was thickest fight, th' angelic throng,
And left large field, unsafe within the wind
Of such commotion. —*Book* vi.

In the following passage from the sixth book of Lucan's Pharsalia, where he describes the incantations of the witch Erycthо, and of whose voice *he had before* said, with great sublimity,

Omne nefas superi prima jam voce precantis
Concedunt, carmenque timent audire secundum—

in labouring to increase the terror of the reader, he has rendered his description almost ludicrous, by accumulating images which serve only to confuse, and which in themselves have scarcely any other relation than that of mere noise—

Tunc vox Lethæos cunctis pollentior herbis
Excantare Deos, confundit murmura primum
Dissona, et humanæ multum discordia linguæ.
Latratus habet illa canum, gemitumque luporum:
Quod trepidus bubo, quod strix nocturna queruntur,
Quod stridunt, ululantque feræ, quod sibilat anguis.
Exprimit, et planctus illisæ cautibus undæ;
Silvarumque sonum, fractæque tonitrua nubis.
Tot rerum vox una fuit.——

Such a collection of unaccording images is scarcely less absurd than the following description of the Nightingale, by Marini—

Una voce pennuta, un suon' volante
E vestito di penne, un vivo fiato,
Una piuma canora, un canto alato,
Un spirituel che d' harmonia composto
Vive in anguste viscere nascosto.

Even less obvious inconsistencies are sufficient to diminish the effect of poetical description, when they do not perfectly coincide with the general emotion expressed.

There is a circumstance introduced in the following passage from Horace, which is liable to this censure—

Solvitur acris Hiems grata vice veris et Favoni,
Trahuntque siccas machinæ carinas:
Ac neque jam stabulis gaudet pecus, aut arator igni:
Nec prata canis albicant pruinis.
Jam Cytherea choros ducit Venus, imminente Luna;
Junctæque Nymphis Gratiæ decentes
Alterno terram quatiunt pede.——

The image contained in the second line is obviously improper. It suggests ideas of labour, and difficulty, and art, and has no correspondence with that emotion of gladness with which we behold the return of the spring, and which is so successfully maintained by the gay and pleasing imagery in the rest of the passage.

In a description of the morning, in the exquisite poem of the Minstrel, there is a circumstance to which the severity of criticism might object upon the same principle—

The cottage curs at early pilgrim bark,
Crown'd with her pail, the tripping milkmaid sings,
The whistling ploughman stalks afield, and, hark!
Down the rough slope the ponderous waggon rings.

The image in the last line, though undoubtedly a striking one in itself, and very beautifully described, is yet improper, as it is inconsistent both with the period of society, and the scenery of the country to which the minstrel refers.

There is a similar error in the following fine description from Shakespeare—

The current, that with gentle murmur glides,
Thou know'st, being stopp'd, impatiently doth rage;
But when his fair course is not hindered,
He makes sweet music with the enamelled stones,
Giving a gentle kiss to every sedge
He overtaketh in his pilgrimage:
And so by many winding nooks he strays
With willing sport to the wild ocean.

The pleasing personification which we attribute to a brook, is founded upon the faint belief of voluntary motion, and is immediately checked, when the poet descends to any very minute or particular resemblance.

Even in that inimitable description which Virgil has given of a storm, in the first book of the Georgics, a very accurate taste may perhaps discover some slight deficiences—

Sæpe etiam immensum cœlo venit agmen aquarum,
Et fœdam glomerant tempestatem imbribus atris
Collectæ ex alto nubes. Ruit arduus æther,
Et pluvia ingenti sata læta boumque labores
Diluit; implentur fossæ, et cava flumina crescunt
Cum sonitu; fervetque fretis spirantibus æquor.
Ipse pater, mediâ nimborum in nocte, coruscâ
Fulmina molitur dextrâ: quo maxima motu
Terra tremit; fugêre feræ; et mortalia corda
Per gentes humiles stravit pavor: ille flagranti
Aut Atho, aut Rhodopen, aut alta Ceraunia telo
Dejicit: ingeminant austri, et densissimus imber.

If there was any passage to which I would object in these wonderful lines, it would be to those that are marked in italics. I acknowledge, indeed, that the 'pluviâ ingenti sata læta boumque labores diluit,' is defensible from the connexion of the imagery with the subject of the poem; but *the 'implentur* fossæ' is both an unnecessary and a

degrading circumstance, when compared with the magnificent effects that are described in the rest of the passage.

I shall conclude these illustrations with two passages, descriptive of the same scene, from different poets, in which the effects of imperfect and of harmonious composition are strikingly exemplified.

In the 'Argonautica' of Apollonius Rhodius, when Medea is described in a state of deep agitation between her unwillingness to betray her father, and her desire to save her lover Jason, the anxiety of her mind is expressed by the following contrast, of which I give a literal translation—

'The night now covered the earth with her shade; and in the open sea the pilots, upon their decks, observed the star of Orion. The travellers and the watchmen slumbered. Even the grief of mothers who had lost their children, was suspended by sleep. In the cities there was neither heard the cry of dogs, nor the noise nor murmur of men. Silence reigned in the midst of darkness. Medea alone knew not the charms of this peaceful night, so deeply was her soul impressed with fears for Jason.'

Virgil describes a similar situation as follows—

> Nox erat, et placidum carpebant fessa soporem
> Corpora per terras, silvæque et sæva quierant
> Æquora: quum medio volvuntur sidera lapsu;
> Quum tacet omnis ager: pecudes, pictæque volucres,
> Quæque lacus late liquidos, quæque aspera dumis
> Rura tenent, somno positæ sub nocte silenti,
> Lenibant curas, et corda oblita laborum.
> At non, infelix animi, Phœnissa.

'On voit ici' (says M. Marmontel, with his usual taste and discernment), 'non seulement la superiorité du talent, la vie, et l'ame repandues dans une poesie harmonieuse, et du coloris le plus pur, mais singulièrement encore la superiorité du goût. Dans la peinture du poëte Grec, il y a des détails inutiles, il y en a des contraires à l'effet du tableau. Les observations des pilotes, dans le silence de la nuit, portent eux-mêmes le caractère de la vigilance et de l'inquietude, et ne contrastent point avec le trouble de Medée. L'image d'une mere qui a perdu ses enfants est faite pour distraire de celle d'une amante; elle en affoiblit l'intérêt, et le poëte en la lui opposant, est allé contre son dessein; au lieu que, dans le tableau de Virgile, tout est réduit à l'unité. C'est la nature entière dans le calme et dans le sommeil, tandis que la malheureuse Didon veille seule, et se livre en proie à tous les tourments de l'amour. Enfin, dans le poëte Grec, le cri des chiens, e sommeil des portiers, sont des details minutieux et indignes de epopee, au lieu que dans Virgile tout est noble et peint à grands raits: huit vers embrassent la nature.'—*Encyclopedie*, *voc.* Imitation.

In these illustrations of the necessity of unity of expression, for the production of the emotions of sublimity and beauty, I have chiefly confined myself to such instances in poetry as are descriptive of natural scenery, because they are most within the observation of that class of readers to whom any illustrations of this point are necessary. The same principle extends, with equal force, to every other branch of poetical imitation, to the description of the characters, the sentiments, and the passions of men: and one great source of the superiority which such imitations have over the originals from which they are copied, consists, in these cases as well as the former, in the power which the artist enjoys of giving an unity of character to his descriptions, which is not to be found in real nature. The illustration of this point, however, as well as of the general fact, that all such descriptions are defective in which this unity is not preserved, I must leave to the reader's own observation. In the same view, I leave the consideration of the effect of contrast; a principle which may at first seem adverse to these conclusions, but which, in fact, is one of the strongest confirmations of them. The reader who is accustomed to such speculations, need not be reminded, that the real end of contrast is to strengthen the effect of the general emotion,—that its propriety is determined by the nature of that emotion,—that it is justly applied only in those cases where the emotion is violent and demands relief, or faint and requires support, or long-continued and needs repose,—and that, in all cases where it exceeds these limits, or where it does not serve to invigorate the character of the composition, it serves only to obstruct or to diminish its effect; and the reader to whom these principles are new may find amusement in verifying them.

IV.—The unity of character which is thus demanded in poetical description, for the production of the emotions of taste, is demanded also in every species of poetical composition, whatever may be its extent.

In describing the events of life, it is the business of the historian to represent them as they really happened; to investigate their causes, however minute; and to report the motives of the actors, however base or mean. In a poetical representation of such events, no such confusion is permitted to appear. A representation destined by its nature to affect, must not only be founded upon some great or interesting subject, but, in the management of this subject, such means only must be employed as are fitted to preserve and to promote the interest and the sympathy of the reader. The historian who should relate the voyage of Æneas, and the foundation of Rome, must of necessity relate many trifling and uninteresting events, which could be valuable only from their being true. The poet who should attempt this subject must introduce only pathetic and sublime events,—must unfold their connexion with greater clearness,—must point out their consequences as

of greater moment,—and must spread, over all, that tone and character of dignity which we both expect and demand in a composition destined to excite the sensibility, and to awaken the admiration of mankind. Even that species of poem which has been called by the critics the historical epic, and which is only a poetical narration of real events, is yet in some measure subjected to the same rule; and though we do not expect from it the sublime machinery, or the artful conduct of the real epic, we yet demand a more uniform tone of elevation, and a purer and more dignified selection of incidents, than from the strict narrative of real history. In both, the poet assumes the character of a person deeply impressed with the magnitude or the interest of the story he relates. To impress his reader with similar sentiments is the end and object of his work; and he can no other wise do this, than by presenting to his mind only such incidents as accord with these great emotions, by leaving out whatever, in the real history of the event, may be mean or uninteresting, and by the invention of every circumstance that, while it is consistent with probability, may raise the subject of his work into greater importance in his esteem. That it is by this rule accordingly the conduct of the epic poem is determined, is too obvious to require any illustration.

The same unity of emotion is demanded in dramatic poetry, at least in the highest and noblest species of it, tragedy; and in the conduct of the drama this unity of character is fully as essential as any of those three unities, of which every book of criticism is so full. If it is painful to us, when we are deeply engaged in some great interest, to turn our minds to the consideration of some other event, it is fully as painful to us, in the midst of our admiration or our sympathy, and while our hearts are swelling with tender or with elevated emotions, to descend to the consideration of minute, or mean, or unimportant incidents, however naturally they may be connected with the story, or however much we may be convinced that they actually took place. The envy which Elizabeth entertained of the beauty of Mary of Scotland was certainly one cause, and certainly a great cause, of the distresses of that most unfortunate queen; but if a poet, in a tragedy founded upon her pathetic story, should introduce the scene which Melville describes in his Memoirs, and in which the weakness of Elizabeth is so apparent, we should consider it both as degrading to the dignity of tragedy, and unsuited to the nature of the emotion which the story is fitted to raise. It is hence that tragi-comedy is utterly indefensible, after all that has been said in its defence. If it is painful to us in such cases to descend to the consideration of indifferent incidents, it is a thousand times more painful to be forced to attend to *those* that are ludicrous; and there is no man of the most common *sensibility who does not* feel his mind revolt, and his indignation kindle, *at the absurdity of the* poet, who can thus break in upon the sacred

retirement of his sorrow, with the intolerable noise of vulgar mirth. Had the taste of Shakespeare been equal to his genius, or had his knowledge of the laws of the drama corresponded to his knowledge of the human heart, the effect of his compositions would not only have been greater than it now is, but greater perhaps than we can well imagine; and had he attempted to produce, through a whole composition, that powerful and uniform interest which he can raise in a single scene, nothing of that perfection would have been wanting of which we may conceive this sublime art to be capable.

Of the necessity of this unity of emotion, Corneille is the first tragedian of modern Europe who seems to have been sensible; and I know not whether the faults of this poet have not been exaggerated by English critics, from their inattention, to the end which he seems to have prescribed to himself in his works. To present a faithful picture of human life, or of human passions, seems not to have been his conception of the intention of tragedy. His object, on the contrary, seems to have been, to exalt and to elevate the imagination; to awaken only the greatest and noblest passions of the human mind; and, by presenting such scenes and such events alone, as could most powerfully promote this end, to render the theatre a school of sublime instruction, rather than an imitation of common life. To effect this purpose, he was early led to see the necessity, or disposed by the greatness of his own mind to the observation, of an uniform character of dignity; to disregard whatever of common, of trivial, or even of pathetic, in the originals from which he copied, might serve to interrupt this peculiar flow of emotion; and instead of giving a simple copy of nature, to adorn the events he represented, with all that eloquence and poetry could afford. He maintains, accordingly, in all his best plays, amid much exaggeration, and much of the false eloquence of his time, a tone of commanding, and even of fascinating dignity, which disposes us almost to believe that we are conversing with beings of a higher order than our own; and which blinds us, at least for a time, to all the faults and all the imperfections of his composition. I am far from being disposed to defend his opinions of tragedy, and still less to excuse his extravagance and bombast; but I conceive, that no person can feel his beauties, or do justice to his merits, who does not regard his tragedies in this view; and I think that some allowance ought to be made for the faults of a poet, who first showed to his country the example of regular tragedy, and whose works the great Prince of Conde called 'The Breviary of Kings.'

In the former section I have endeavoured to show, that no objects are in themselves fitted to produce the emotions of sublimity or beauty, which are not productive of some simple emotion. In this, I have attempted to show, that no composition of objects or qualities is in fact *productive of such* emotions, in which an unity of character is

not preserved. The slight illustrations which I have now offered are probably sufficient to point out the truth of the general principle; but the application of it to the different arts of taste, and the explanation of the great rules of composition from this constitution of our nature, are objects far beyond the limits of these essays. I must satisfy myself, therefore, with observing in general, that, in all the fine arts, that composition is most excellent in which the different parts most fully unite in the production of one unmingled emotion; and that taste the most perfect, where the perception of this relation of objects, in point of expression, is most delicate and precise.

CONCLUSION.

I.—THE illustrations in the first chapter of this essay are intended to show, that whenever the emotions of beauty or sublimity are felt, that an exercise of imagination is produced which consists in the prosecution of a train of thought.

The illustrations in the second chapter are intended to point out the distinction between such trains, and our ordinary trains of thought, and to show, that this difference consists, first, in the ideas which compose them being in all cases ideas of emotion; and secondly, in their possessing an uniform principle of connexion through the whole of the train. The effect, therefore, which is produced upon the mind, by objects of taste, may be considered as consisting in the production of a regular or consistent train of ideas of emotion.

II.—The account which I have now given of this effect, may perhaps serve to point out an important distinction between the emotions of taste, and all our different emotions of simple pleasure. In the case of these last emotions, no additional train of thought is necessary. The pleasurable feeling follows immediately the presence of the object or quality, and has no dependence upon anything for its perfection, but the sound state of the sense by which it is received. The emotions of joy, pity, benevolence, gratitude, utility, propriety, novelty, &c., might undoubtedly be felt, although we had no such power of mind as that by which we follow out a train of ideas, and certainly are felt in a thousand cases, when this faculty is unemployed.

In the case of the emotions of taste, on the other hand, it seems evident that this exercise of mind is necessary, and that unless this train of thought is produced, these emotions are unfelt. Whatever may be the nature of that simple emotion which any object is fitted to excite, whether that of gaiety, tranquillity, melancholy, &c., if it pro*duce not a train* of kindred thought in our minds, we are conscious *only of that simple* emotion. Whenever, on the contrary, this train

of thought, or this exercise of imagination is produced, we are conscious of an emotion of a higher and more pleasing kind; and which, though it is impossible to describe in language, we yet distinguish by the name of the emotion of taste. If accordingly the author of our nature had denied us this faculty of imagination, it should seem that these emotions could not have been felt, and that all our emotions would have been limited to those of simple pleasure.

The emotions of taste may therefore be considered as distinguished from the emotions of simple pleasure, by their being dependent upon the exercise of our imagination; and though founded in all cases upon some simple emotion, as yet further requiring the employment of this faculty for their existence.

III.—As in every operation of taste there are thus two different faculties employed, viz.—some affection or emotion raised, and the imagination excited to a train of thought corresponding to this emotion, the peculiar pleasure which attends, and which constitutes the emotions of taste, may naturally be considered as composed of the pleasures which separately attend the exercise of these faculties, or, in other words, as produced by the union of pleasing emotion, with the pleasure which, by the constitution of our nature, is annexed to the exercise of imagination. That both these pleasures are felt in every operation of taste, seems to me very agreeable to common experience and observation.

1. That in every case of the emotions of sublimity or beauty, that simple emotion of pleasure is felt, which arises from the peculiar nature of the object perceived, every man, I conceive, may very easily satisfy himself. In any beautiful object, whose character is cheerfulness, we are conscious of a feeling of cheerfulness,—in objects of melancholy, of a feeling of sadness,—in objects of utility, of a feeling of satisfaction and complacence, similar to what we feel from objects of the same kind, when the emotion of beauty is not excited. In sublime objects, in the same manner, whatever their character may be, whether that of greatness, terror, power, &c., we are conscious of the feelings of admiration, of awe, of humility, &c., and of the same pleasures from the exercise of them, which we feel in those cases where the emotion of sublimity is not produced. In the trains of thought which are excited by objects either of sublimity or beauty, every man knows, that the character of those trains is determined by the peculiar nature of the object; and instead of the emotions of taste being attended with one uniform species of pleasure, every man must have felt, that the sum of his pleasure is in a great degree composed of the peculiar pleasure the exercise of different affections brings.

2. That there is a pleasure also annexed, by the constitution of our nature, to the exercise of imagination, is a proposition which seems to require very *little illustration*. In common opinion, the employ-

ment of imagination is always supposed to communicate delight; when we yield to its power, we are considered as indulging in a secret pleasure; and every superiority in the strength or sensibility of this faculty is believed to be attended with a similar increase in the happiness of human life. Nor is this persuasion of the connexion of pleasure with the exercise of imagination confined to those cases where the mind is employed in contemplating only images of joy; for even in those men whose constitution disposes them to gloomy or melancholy thought, we have still a belief that there is some secret and fascinating charm in the disposition which they indulge, and that, in this operation of mind itself, they find a pleasure which more than compensates for all the pain which the character of their thoughts may bring. There is a state of mind, also, which every man must have felt, when, without any particular object of meditation, the imagination seems to retire from the realities of life, and to wander amid a creation of its own; when the most varied and discordant scenes rise as by enchantment before the mind; and when all the other faculties of our nature seem gradually to be obscured, to give to this creation of fancy a more radiant glow. With what delight such employments of imagination are attended, the young and the romantic can tell, to whom they are often more dear than all the real enjoyments of life; and who, from the noise and tumult of vulgar joy, often hasten to retire to solitude and silence, where they may yield with security to these illusions of imagination, and indulge their visionary bliss.

On a subject of this kind, however, when illustration is perhaps less important than description, I am happy to be able to transcribe a passage, which will render unnecessary every illustration that I can give. It is a passage from a posthumous work of M. Rousseau, in which he describes his mode of life, during a summer which he passed in the island of St. Pierre, in the little lake of Bienne.

'Quand le beau tems m'invitoit, j'allois me jetter seul dans un bateau que je conduisois au milieu du lac, quand l'eau étoit calme, et là, m'étendant tout de mon long dans le bateau, les yeux tournés vers le ciel, je me laissois aller et dériver lentement au gré de l'eau, quelquefois pendant plusieurs heures, plongé dans mille rêveries confuses, mais délicieuses, et qui sans avoir aucun objet bien déterminé ni constant, ne laissoient pas d'être à mon gré cent fois préférable á tout ce que j'avois trouvé de plus doux dans ce qu'on appele les plaisirs de la vie.———

'———Quand le soir approchoit, je descendois des cimes de l'isle, et j'allois volontiers m'asseoir au bord du lac, sur la grève dans quelque asyle caché; là le bruit des vagues, et l'agitation de l'eau fixant mes *sens, et c*hassant de mon ame toute autre agitation, la plongeoient *dans une rêverie* délicieuse, où la nuit me surprenoit souvent sans que *je m'en fusse apperçu.* Le flux et reflux de cette eau, son bruit con-

tinu, mais renflé par intervalles, frappant sans relâche mon oreille et mes yeux, suppléoient au mouvemens internes que la rêverie éteignoit en moi, et suffisoient pour me faire sentir avec plaisir mon éxistence, sans prendre la peine de penser.———

'———Tel est l'etat où je me suis trouvé souvent à l'isle de St. Pierre dans mes rêveries solitaires, soit couché dans mon bateau que je laissois dériver au gré de l'eau, soit assis sur les rives du lac agité, soit ailleurs au bord d'une belle rivière, ou d'un ruisseau murmurant sur le gravier. Telle est la manière dont j'ai passé mon tems, durant le séjour que j'y ai fait. Qu'on me dise à present ce qu'il y a là d'assez attrayant pour exciter dans mon cœur de regrèts si vifs, si tendres, et si durables, qu'au bout de quinze ans il m'est impossible de songer à cette habitation cherie, sans m'y sentir à chaque fois transporter encore par les élans du desir.———

'———J'ai pensé quelquefois assez profondement, mais rarement avec plaisir, presque toujours contre mon grè, et comme par force; la rêverie me delasse et m'amuse, la reflexion me fatigue et m'attriste. Quelquefois mes rêveries finissent par meditation, mais plus souvent mes meditations finissent par la rêverie; et durant ces égaremens mon ame erre et plâne dans l'univers sur les aîles de l'imagination, dans des éxtases qui passent toute autre jouissance.

'Tant que je goutai celle-là dans toute sa pureté, toute autre occupation me fut toujours insipide. Mais quand une fois, jetté dans la carrière littéraire, par des impulsions étrangers, je sentis la fatigue du travail d'esprit, et l'importunité d'une célebrité malheureuse, je sentis en même tems languir et s'attiédir mes douces rêveries, et bientôt forcé de m'occuper malgrè moi de ma triste situation, je ne pus plus retrouver, que bien rarement, ces chères éxtases, qui durant cinquante ans m'avoient tenu lieu de fortune et de gloire; et sans autre dépense que celle du tems, m'avoient rendu dans l'oisieveté le plus heureux des mortels.'—*Les Reveries, Promenade, 5. et 7.*

If it is allowed, then, that there is a pleasure annexed, by the constitution of our nature, to the exercise of imagination; and if the illustrations in the first chapter are just, which are intended to show, that when this exercise of mind is not produced, the emotions of taste are unfelt, and that when it is increased, these emotions are increased with it, we seem to possess sufficient evidence to conclude, that this pleasure exists, and forms a part of that peculiar pleasure which we receive from objects of sublimity and beauty.

The pleasure, therefore, which accompanies the emotions of taste, may be considered not as a simple, but as a complex pleasure; and as arising, not from any separate and peculiar sense, but from the union of the pleasure of simple emotion with that which is annexed, by the constitution of the mind, to the exercise of imagination.

IV.—The *distinction which* thus appears to subsist between the emo-

tions of simple pleasure, and that complex pleasure which accompanies the emotions of taste, seems to require a similar distinction in philosophical language. I believe, indeed, that the distinction is actually to be found in the common language of conversation; and I apprehend that the term delight is very generally used to express the peculiar pleasure which attends the emotions of taste, in contradistinction to the general term pleasure, which is appropriated to simple emotion. We are pleased, we say, with the gratification of any appetite or affection,—with food when hungry, and with rest when tired,—with the gratification of curiosity, of benevolence, or of resentment. But we say, we are delighted with the prospect of a beautiful landscape, with the sight of a fine statue, with hearing a pathetic piece of music, with the perusal of a celebrated poem. In these cases, the term delight is used to denote that pleasure which arises from sublimity and beauty, and to distinguish it from those simpler pleasures which arise from objects that are only agreeable. I acknowledge, indeed, that this distinction is not very accurately adhered to in common language, because, in most cases, either of the terms equally expresses our meaning; but I apprehend, that the observation of it is sufficiently general, to show some consciousness in mankind of a difference between these pleasures, and to justify such a distinction in philosophical language as may express it.

If it were permitted me, therefore, I should wish to appropriate the term delight, to signify the peculiar pleasure which attends the emotions of taste, or which is felt, when the imagination is employed in the prosecution of a regular train of ideas of emotion.

ESSAY II.

ON THE SUBLIMITY AND BEAUTY OF THE MATERIAL WORLD.

CHAPTER I.—INTRODUCTORY.

IF the illustrations in the preceding essay are just, if that exercise of mind which takes place when the emotions of beauty or sublimity are felt consists in the prosecution of a regular train of ideas of emotion, and if no other objects are in fact productive of the emotions of taste, but such as are fitted to produce some simple emotion, there arises a question of some difficulty and of very considerable importance, viz.—*What is the source of the sublimity and beauty of the material world.*

It cannot be doubted that many objects of the material world are productive of the emotions of sublimity and beauty: some of the fine arts are altogether employed about material objects; and far the greater part of the instances of beauty or of sublimity which occur in every man's experience will be found in matter, or in some of its qualities.

On the other hand, I think it must be allowed that matter in itself is unfitted to produce any kind of emotion. The various qualities of matter are known to us only by means of our external senses; but all that such powers of our nature convey is sensation and perception; and whoever will take the trouble of attending to the effect which such qualities, when simple and unassociated, produce upon his mind, will be satisfied that in no case do they produce emotion, or the exercise of any of his affections. The common language of mankind upon this subject perfectly coincides with this observation. Such qualities, when simple, are always spoken of as producing sensation, but in no case as producing emotion; and although perhaps the general word feeling (as applied both to our external and internal senses) may sometimes be used ambiguously, yet if we attend to it, we shall find that, with regard to material qualities, it is uniformly used to express sensation, and that, if we substitute emotion for it, every man will perceive the mistake. The smell of a rose, the colour of scarlet, the taste of a pine-apple, when spoken of merely as qualities, and abstracted from the objects in which they are found, are said to produce agreeable sensations, but not agreeable emotions. In the same manner, the smell of assafœtida, or the taste of aloes, when spoken of as abstract qualities, are uniformly said to produce unpleasing emotions. If we could conceive ourselves possessed only of those powers which we have by means of our external senses, I apprehend there can be no doubt that, in such a case, the qualities of matter would produce only sensation and perception: that such sensations might be either pleasing or painful, but that in no case could they be attended with any emotion.

But although the qualities of matter are in themselves incapable of producing emotion, or the exercise of any affection, yet it is obvious that they may produce this effect from their association with other qualities; and as being either the signs or expression of such qualities as are fitted by the constitution of our nature to produce emotion. Thus, in the human body, particular forms or colours are the signs of particular passions or affections. In works of art, particular forms are the signs of dexterity, of taste, of convenience, of utility. In the works of nature, particular sounds and colours, &c., are the signs of peace, or danger, or plenty, or desolation, &c. In such cases, the constant connexion we discover between the sign and the thing signified, between the material quality and the quality productive of emotion, renders at last the one expressive

to us of the other, and often disposes us to attribute to the sign, that effect which is produced only by the quality signified.

That such associations are formed with material qualities, every man has sufficient evidence in his own experience; and there are many causes which may be assigned, both of the extent and of the universality of such associations. I shall remark a few of these, without pretending to an accurate enumeration.

1. All those external objects, which, from their nature or constitution, are productive to us, either of use, of convenience, or of pleasure, or which in any other way are fitted to produce emotion, are known and distinguished by their qualities of form and colour. Such qualities, therefore, are naturally, and even necessarily expressive to us of those uses, or conveniencies, or pleasures. It is by them that we become acquainted with the subjects from which such utilities arise; it is by them that we learn to distinguish such subjects from one another; and as they are the permanent signs of these several utilities, they affect us with the same emotion which the utilities signified by them are fitted to produce. The material qualities, for instance, which distinguish a ship, a plough, a printing-press, or a musical instrument, do not solely afford us the perception of certain colours or forms, but, along with this perception, bring with it the conception of the different uses or pleasures which such compositions of material qualities produce, and excite in us the same emotion with the uses or pleasures thus signified. As, in this manner, the utilities or pleasures of all external objects are expressed to us by their material signs of colour and of form, such signs are naturally productive of the emotions which properly arise from the qualities signified.

2. The qualities of design, of wisdom, of skill, are uniformly expressed to us by certain qualities of form, and certain compositions of forms, colours, and sounds. Such qualities, therefore, or compositions of qualities, become the signs of design, or wisdom, or skill, and like all other signs, affect us with the same emotion which we receive from the qualities signified.

3. All our knowledge of the minds of other men, and of their various qualities, is gained by means of material signs. Power, strength, wisdom, fortitude, justice, benevolence, magnanimity, gentleness, tenderness, love, &c., are all known to us by means of the external signs of them in the countenance, the gesture, or the voice. Such material signs are therefore very early associated in our minds with the qualities they signify; and as they are constant and invariable, become soon productive to us of the same emotions with the qualities themselves.

In the same manner, the characters, the dispositions, the instincts of all the various tribes of animals, are known to us by certain signs in their frame, or voice, or gesture. Such signs become therefore ex-

pressive to us of these characters, or instincts, or dispositions, and affect us with all the emotions which such qualities are fitted to produce.

4. Besides these immediate expressions of qualities of mind by material signs, there are others which arise from resemblance, in which the qualities of matter become significant to us of some affecting or interesting quality of mind. We learn from experience, that certain qualities of mind are signified by certain qualities of body. When we find similar qualities of body in inanimate matter, we are apt to attribute to them the same expression, and to conceive them as signifying the same qualities in this case, as in those cases where they derive their expression immediately from mind. Thus, strength and delicacy, coldness and modesty, old age and youth, &c., are all expressed by particular material signs in the human form, and in many cases by similiar signs in the forms of animals. When we find similar appearances in the forms of inanimate matter, we are disposed to consider them as expressive of the same qualities, and to regard them with similar emotions. The universality of such associations is evident from the structure of the rudest languages. The strength of the oak, the delicacy of the myrtle, the boldness of a rock, the modesty of the violet, &c., are expressions common in all languages, and so common, that they are scarcely in any considered as figurative; yet every one knows, that strength and weakness, boldness and modesty, are qualities, not of matter, but of mind; and, that, without our knowledge of mind, it is impossible that we should ever have had any conception of them. How much the effect of descriptions of natural scenery arises from that personification which is founded upon such associations, I believe there is no man of common taste who must not often have been sensible of it.

5. We are led by the constitution of our nature, also, to perceive resemblances between our sensations and emotions, and of consequence between the objects that produce them. Thus, there is some analogy between the sensation of gradual ascent, and the emotion of ambition,—between the sensation of gradual descent, and the emotion of decay,—between the lively sensation of sunshine, and the cheerful emotion of joy,—between the painful sensation of darkness, and the dispiriting emotion of sorrow. In the same manner, there are analogies between silence and tranquillity,—between the lustre of morning, and the gaiety of hope,—between softness of colouring, and gentleness of character,—between slenderness of form, and delicacy of mind, &c. The objects, therefore, which produce such sensations, though in themselves not the immediate signs of such interesting or affecting qualities, yet, in consequence of this resemblance, become gradually expressive of them, and if not always, yet at those times, at least, when we are under *the dominion* of any emotion, serve to bring to our minds

the images of all those affecting or interesting qualities, which we have been accustomed to suppose they resemble. How extensive this source of association is, may easily be observed in the extent of such kinds of figurative expression in every language.

6. Besides these, language itself is another very important cause of the extent of such associations. The analogies between the qualities of matter, and the qualities of mind, which any individual might discover or observe, might perhaps be few, and must of course be limited by his situation and circumstances; but the use of language gives, to every individual who employs it, the possession of all the analogies which so many ages have observed, between material qualities, and qualities capable of producing emotion. Of how much consequence this is, may be discovered in the different impressions which are made by the same objects on the common people, whose vocabulary is limited by their wants, and on those who may have had the advantage of a liberal education.

7. To all these sources of association is to be added, that which is peculiar to every individual. There is no man, almost, who has not, from accident, from the events of his life, or from the nature of his studies, connected agreeable or interesting recollections with particular colours, or sounds, or forms, and to whom such sounds or colours, &c., are not pleasing from such an association. They affect us, in some measure, as the signs of these interesting qualities, and, as in other cases, produce in us the same emotion with the qualities which they signify.

These observations are probably sufficient to show the numerous and extensive associations we have with matter, and its various qualities, as well as to illustrate some of the means by which it becomes significant or expressive to us of very different, and far more interesting qualities than those it possesses in itself. By means of the connection, or resemblance, which subsists between the qualities of matter, and qualities capable of producing emotion, the perception of the one immediately, and very often irresistibly, suggests the idea of the other; and so early are these associations formed, that it requires afterwards some pains to separate this connection, and to prevent us from attributing to the sign, that effect which is produced alone by the quality signified.

Whatever may be the truth of these observations, it cannot at least be doubted, that the qualities of matter are often associated with others, and that they affect us in such cases, like all other signs, by leading our imaginations to the qualities they signify. It seems to be equally obvious, that in all cases where matter, or any of its qualities, produces the emotions of sublimity or beauty, this effect must arise *either from these* material qualities themselves; from their being fitted *by the constitution* of our nature to produce such emotions; or from

some other qualities with which they are associated, and of which they operate as the signs of expressions.

It should seem, therefore, that a very simple, and a very obvious principle is sufficient to guide our investigation into the source of the sublimity and beauty of the qualities of matter. If these qualities are in themselves fitted to produce the emotions of sublimity or beauty (or, in other words, are in themselves beautiful or sublime), I think it is obvious that they must produce these emotions, independently of any association. If, on the contrary, it is found that these qualities only produce such emotions when they are associated with interesting or affecting qualities, and that when such associations are destroyed, they no longer produce the same emotions, I think it must also be allowed that their beauty or sublimity is to be ascribed, not to the material, but to the associated qualities.

That this is in reality the case, I shall endeavour to show, by a great variety of illustrations. It is necessary, however, for me to premise, that I am very far from considering the inquiries which follow, as a complete examination of the subject. They are indeed only detached observations on the sublimity and beauty of some of the most important classes of material qualities, but which, however imperfect they may severally be, yet seem to possess considerable weight from their collective evidence.

Chapter II.—Of the Sublimity and Beauty of Sound.

The senses by which we chiefly discover beauty or sublimity in material objects, are those of hearing and seeing.

The objects of the first are, sounds, whether simple or composed.

The objects of the second are, colours, forms, and motion.

Sec. I.—Of Simple Sounds.—I shall begin with considering some of those instances, where simple sounds are productive of the emotions of sublimity or beauty. It may be sufficient, at present, to consider them in the following order:—

1. Sounds that occur in inanimate nature. 2. The notes of animals And, 3. The tones of the human voice.

Part I.—Of Miscellaneous Sounds.—Of the first class, or of those miscellaneous sounds that occur in inanimate nature, there are many which produce emotions of sublimity and beauty.

I.—1. All sounds in general are sublime, which are associated with ideas of danger; the howling of a storm,—the murmuring of an earthquake,—the report of artillery,—the explosion of thunder, &c.

2. All sounds are in general sublime, which are associated with ideas of great power or might; the noise of a torrent,—the fall of a cataract,—the uproar of a tempest,—the explosion of gunpowder,—the dashing of the waves, &c.

3. All sounds, in the same manner, are sublime, which are associated with ideas of majesty or solemnity, or deep melancholy, or any other strong emotion; the sound of the trumpet, and all other warlike instruments,—the note of the organ,—the sound of the curfew,—the tolling of the passing bell, &c.

That the sublimity of such sounds arises from the ideas of danger or power, or majesty, &c., which are associated with them, and not from the sounds themselves, or from any original fitness in such sounds to produce this emotion, seems to be obvious from the following considerations.

1. Such sounds, instead of having any permanent or definite character of sublimity, vary in their effect with the qualities they happen to express, and assume different characters, according to the nature of these qualities.

If sounds in themselves were sublime, it might reasonably be expected in this, as in every other case of sense, that their difference of effect would be strictly proportioned to their difference of character, and that sounds of the same kind or character would invariably produce the same emotion. The following instances, however, seem to show, that no specific character of sublimity belongs to mere sound, and that the same sounds may produce very different kinds of emotion, according to the qualities with which we associate them.

The sound of thunder is, perhaps of all others in nature, the most sublime. In the generality of mankind, this sublimity is founded on awe, and some degree of terror; yet how different is the emotion which it gives to the peasant who sees at last, after a long drought, the consent of heaven to his prayers for rain,—to the philosopher, who, from the height of the Alps, hears it roll beneath his feet,—to the soldier, who, under the impression of ancient superstition, welcomes it, upon the moment of engagement, as the omen of victory! In all these cases, the sound itself is the same: but how different the nature of the sublimity it produces! The report of artillery is sublime, from the images both of power and of danger we associate with it. The noise of an engagement heard from a distance is dreadfully sublime. The firing of a review is scarcely more than magnificent. The sound of a real skirmish between a few hundred men, would be more sublime than all the noise of a feigned engagement between a hundred thousand men. The straggling fire of a company of soldiers upon a field-*day* is contemptible, and always excites laughter. The straggling fire *of the same number* of men in a riot, would be extremely sublime, *and perhaps more* terrible than an uniform report.

The howling of a tempest is powerfully sublime, from many associations; yet how different to the inhabitant of the land, and the sailor, who is far from refuge,—to the inhabitant of the sheltered plain, and the traveller bewildered in the mountains,—to the poor man who has nothing to lose, and the wealthy, whose fortunes are at the mercy of the storm! In all these cases, the sound itself is the same, but the nature of the sublimity it produces is altogether different; and corresponds, not to the effect upon the organ of hearing, but to the character or situations of the men by whom it is heard, and the different qualities of which it is expressive to them.

The sound of a cascade is almost always sublime; yet no man ever felt in it the same species of sublimity, in a fruitful plain, and in a wild and romantic country,—in the pride of summer, and in the desolation of winter,—in the hours of gaiety, or tranquillity, or elevation,—and in seasons of melancholy, or anxiety, or despair. The sound of a trumpet is often sublime; but how different the sublimity in the day of battle,—in the march of an army in peace,—or amid the splendours of a procession! There are few single sounds more sublime than the report of a cannon; yet every one must have felt the different emotions of sublimity with which the same sounds may affect him, and at the same intervals, in moments of public sorrow, or public rejoicing.

In these, and many other instances that might be mentioned, the nature of the emotion we experience, corresponds, not to the nature of the sound itself, but to the nature of the association we connect with it; and is in fact altogether the same with the emotion which the same quality produces, when unaccompanied with sound. If sounds in themselves were fitted by the constitution of our nature to produce these emotions, it would seem that greater uniformity would be found in their effects; that the difference of their effects would be proportioned to the difference of their nature as sounds; and that the same sounds would permanently produce the same emotion.

2. If any particular sounds are fitted by our constitution to produce the emotion of sublimity, it seems impossible that sounds of a contrary kind should produce the same emotion. If, on the contrary, the sublimity of sounds arises from the qualities we associate with them, it may reasonably be expected, that sounds of all kinds will produce this emotion, when they are expressive of such qualities as are in themselves sublime. Many very familiar observations seem to illustrate this point.

The most general character, perhaps, of sublimity in sounds, is that of loudness, and there are doubtless many instances where such sounds are very constantly sublime; yet there are many instances also, where the contrary quality of sounds is also sublime; and when this happens, it will universally be found, that such sounds are associated with ideas

of power or danger, or some other quality capable of exciting strong emotion. The loud and tumultuous sound of a storm is undoubtedly sublime; but there is a low and feeble sound which frequently precedes it, more sublime in reality than all the uproar of the storm itself, and which has accordingly been frequently made use of by poets, in heightening their descriptions of such scenes.

> Along the woods, along the moorish fens
> Sighs the sad Genius of the coming storr
> And up among the loose disjointed cliffs
> And fractur'd mountains wild, the brawling brook
> And cave, presageful, send a hollow moan,
> Resounding long in Fancy's listening ear.
> Then comes the Father of the Tempest forth, &c.
>
> *Thomson's Winter.*

'Did you never observe,' (says Mr. Gray, in a letter to a friend) *while rocking winds are piping loud,* that pause, as the gust is recollecting itself, and rising upon the ear in a shrill and plaintive note, like the swell of an Æolian harp? I do assure you there is nothing in the world so like the voice of a spirit.' Such a sound in itself is inconsiderable, and resembles many others which are very far from being sublime; but, as the forerunner of the storm, and the sign of all the imagery we connect with it, it is sublime in a very great degree. There is, in the same manner, said to be a low rumbling noise preceding an earthquake, in itself very inconsiderable, and generally likened to some very contemptible sounds; yet in such a situation, and with all the images of danger and horror to which it leads, I question whether there is another sound so dreadfully sublime. The soft and placid tone of the human voice is surely not sublime; yet in the following passage, which of the great images that precede it is so powerfully so? It is a passage from the first book of Kings, in which the Deity is described as appearing to the prophet Elijah. 'And he said, go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord. And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake: and after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire *a still small voice.* And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle.'——

Another great division of sounds is into Grave and Acute. If either of these classes of sound is sublime in itself, it should follow, according to the general laws of sensation, that the other should not be so. In fact, however, the sublime is found in both; and perhaps it may be *difficult to say* to which of them it most permanently belongs. Instances *of this kind* are within reach of every person's observation.

In the same manner, it may be observed, that the most common, and, in general, the most insignificant sounds become sublime, whenever they are associated with images belonging to power, or danger, or melancholy, or any other strong emotion, although in other cases they affect us with no emotion whatever. There is scarcely in nature a more trifling sound than the buzz of flies, yet I believe there is no man of common taste, who, in the deep silence of a summer's noon, has not found something strikingly sublime in this inconsiderable sound. The falling of a drop of water, produces in general a very insignificant and unexpressive sound; yet sometimes in vaults, and in large cathedrals, a single drop is heard to fall at intervals, from the roof, than which, I know not if there is a single sound more strikingly sublime. One can scarcely mention a sound less productive of the sublime, than the sound of a hammer. How powerfully, however, in the following description, has Shakespeare made this vulgar sound sublime!

> From camp to camp, thro' the foul womb of night,
> The hum of either army stilly sounds,
> That the fix'd sentinels almost receive
> The secret whispers of each other's watch.
> Fire answers fire, and thro' their paly flames
> Each battle sees the other's umber'd face;
> Steed threatens steed, in high and boastful neighs
> Piercing the night's dull ear; and from the tents
> The armourers, accomplishing the knights,
> With busy hammers closing rivets up,
> Give dreadful note of preparation.—*Henry* V. *act.* iv. *Chorus.*

The sound of oars in water is surely very far from being sublime, yet in a tragedy of Thomson's, this sound is made strikingly sublime, when (in the person of a man who had been left by the treachery of his companions upon a desert island), he describes the horrors he felt, when he first found his being deserted: And adds,

> I never heard
> A sound so dismal as their parting oars.——

Instances of the same kind are so numerous, that it is unnecessary to insist upon them. If sounds are sublime in themselves, independently of all association, it seems difficult to account for contrary sounds producing the same effect, and for the same sounds producing different effects, according to the associations with which they are connected.

3. When such associations are dissolved, the sounds themselves cease to be sublime. There are many cases, undoubtedly, in which this experiment cannot be made, because in many cases the connexion between such sounds, and the qualities they indicate, is constant and invariable. The connexion between the sound of thunder, of a whirl-

wind, of a torrent, of an earthquake, and the qualities of power, or danger, or awfulness, which they signify, and which the objects themselves permanently involve, is established, not by man, but by nature. It has no dependence upon his will, and cannot be affected by any discipline of his imagination. It is no wonder, therefore, while such connexions are so permanent, that the sublimity which belongs to the qualities of the objects themselves, should be attributed to their external signs, and that such signs should be considered in themselves as fitted to produce this emotion. The only case in which these associations are positively dissolved, is when, by some error of judgment, we either mistake some different sound for the sound of any of these objects, or are imposed upon by some imitation of these sounds. In such cases, I think it will not be denied, that when we discover our mistake, the sounds are no longer sublime.

There is nothing more common than for people who are afraid of thunder, to mistake some very common and indifferent sound for it; as the rumbling of a cart, or the rattling of a carriage. While their mistake continues, they feel the sound as sublime: the moment they are undeceived, they are the first to laugh at their error, and to ridicule the sound which occasioned it. Children at first are as much alarmed at the thunder of the stage, as at real thunder. Whenever they find that it is only a deception, they amuse themselves with mimicking it. It may be observed also, that very young children show no symptons of fear or admiration at thunder, unless perhaps when it is painfully loud, or when they see other people alarmed about them: obviously from their not having yet associated with it the idea of danger; and perhaps also from this cause, that our imagination assists the report, and makes it appear much louder than it really is: a circumstance which seems to be confirmed by the common mistake we make of very inconsiderable noises for it. Mistakes in the same manner are often made in those countries where earthquakes are common, between very inconsiderable sounds, and that low rumbling sound which is said to precede such an event. There cannot be a doubt, that the moment the mistake is discovered, the noise ceases to be sublime. In all other cases of the same kind, where mistakes of this nature happen, or where we are deceived by imitation, I believe it is agreeable to every person's experience, that while the mistake continues, the sounds affect us as sublime; but that as soon as we are undeceived and that the sign is found not to be acccompanied with the qualities usually signified, it ceases immediately to affect us with any emotion. If any sounds were in themselves sublime, or fitted by the constitution of our nature to produce this emotion, independently of all association, it would seem that there could be no change of our emotion, and that these sounds would as permanently produce their correspondent emotion, as the objects of every other sense produce their correspondent ideas.

In all cases, however, where these associations are either accidental or temporary, and not, as in the former case, permanent in their nature, it will be found that sounds are sublime only, when they are expressive of qualities capable of producing some powerful emotion, and that in all other cases, the same sounds are simply indifferent. In some of the instances formerly mentioned, where common or vulgar sounds are rendered sublime by association, it is obvious, that the same sounds in general, when they have no such expression to us, are very different from sublimity. The buzz of flies, the dropping of water, the sound of a hammer, the dashing of an oar, and many others which might easily be mentioned, are, in general, sounds absolutely indifferent, and so far from possessing any sublimity in themselves, that it might be difficult at first to persuade any man that they could be made so. Their sublimity therefore can only be attributed to the qualities which they signify.

There are few sounds, in the same manner, much more sublime than the striking of a great clock at midnight. In other situations, the very same sound is altogether different in its expression. In the morning it is cheerful,—at noon indifferent, or at least unnoticed,—in the evening plaintive,—at night only sublime. In the tolling of a bell the sound is uniformly the same; yet such a sound has very different expressions, from the peculiar purposes to which it is applied. The passing bell, and the funeral bell, alone are sublime. The whistling of the wind in an autumnal, or in a wintry night, is often felt as sublime, and has accordingly been frequently introduced into poetical descriptions of a similar character. The nicest ear, however, is unable to distinguish any difference betwixt this sound, in the seasons before mentioned, and in spring or summer, when, if it has any character at all, it has a character very different from sublimity. The trumpet is very generally employed in scenes of magnificence or solemnity. The sound of the trumpet in such situations is accordingly very sublime, and seems to us to be expressive of that solemnity or magnificence. This instrument, however, as every one knows, is very often degraded to very mean offices. In such cases, the sound is altogether indifferent, if not contemptible. The bagpipe has, to a Scotch highlander, no inconsiderable degree of sublimity, from its being the martial instrument of the country, and of consequence associated with many spirited and many magnificent images. To the rest of the world, the sound of this instrument is at best but barely tolerable. They who are acquainted with the history of superstition will recollect many instances where sounds have become sublime from this association, which to the rest of mankind were very insignificant, and which have become also insignificant both to individuals and to nations, when the superstitions their expression was founded on had ceased.

There are several other considerations, from which the principle I

here endeavour to illustrate, might be confirmed,—the uniform connexion between sublime sounds, and some quality capable of producing emotion, and the impossibility of finding an instance where sound is sublime, independently of all association,—the great difference in the number of sounds that are sublime to the common people, and men of cultivated or poetical imagination,—and the difference which every man feels in the effect of such sounds in producing this emotion, according to the particular state of his own mind, or according to the particular strength or weakness of his sensibility to the qualities which such sounds express. But I am unwilling to anticipate the reader in speculations which he can so easily prosecute for himself. If the illustratrations I have already offered are just; if sounds of all kinds are sublime, when they are expressive of any qualities capable of producing strong emotions; and if no sounds continue to be sublime when they cease to be expressive of such qualities, it is, I think, reasonable to conclude that the sublimity of such sounds is to be ascribed, not to the mere quality of sound, but to those associated qualities of which it is significant.

II.—There is a great variety of sounds also, that occur in the scenes of nature, which are productive of the emotion of beauty; the sound of a waterfall, the murmuring of a rivulet, the whispering of the wind, the sheepfold bell, the sound of the curfew, &c.

That such sounds are associated in our minds, with various qualities capable of producing emotion, I think every man may be satisfied from his own experience. When such sounds occur, they are expressive to us of some particular character; they suit one species of emotion, and not others; and if this were not obvious in itself, it might be made sufficiently obvious, from the use of such sounds in poetical composition. Every man, therefore, judges of the propriety of their introduction, and determines with regard to the taste and judgment of the poet, by their suitableness to the nature of the emotion he has it in his view to excite. Every man, therefore, has some peculiar emotion associated with such sounds, or some quality, of which they are considered as the signs or expressions.

That the beauty of such sounds arises from the qualities of which they are expressive, and not from any original fitness in them to produce this emotion, may perhaps be evident from the following considerations.

1. To those who have no such associations, or who consider them simply as sounds, they have no beauty. It is long before children show any degree of sensibility to the beauty of such sounds. To the greater number of them, in the same manner, the common people are *altogether* indifferent. To the peasant, the curfew is only the mark of *the hour of the* evening,—the sheep-bell, the sign of the neighbourhood of the flock,—the sound of a cascade, the sign of the falling of

water, &c. Give them the associations which men of cultivated imagination have with such sounds, and they will infallibly feel their beauty.

In the same manner, men of the best natural taste, who have not formed such associations, are equally insensible to the beauty of such sounds. The inhabitant of a country where there are no waterfalls, is stunned at first with the noise of a cascade, but is not delighted with it. They who are not accustomed to the curfew, and who are ignorant of its being the evening bell, and, as such, associated with all those images of tranquillity and peace which render that season of the day so charming, feel nothing more from its sound, than from the sound of a bell at any other hour of the day. The sound of the sheepfold bell is but an insignificant noise to those who have never lived in a pastoral country, and who do not consider it as expressive of those images of simple and romantic pleasure, which are so naturally connected with such scenes. Every man acquainted with the poetry of distant nations, knows, in the same manner, how much the beauty of many allusions to peculiar sounds of these countries is lost to those who are strangers to them, and who, of consequence, have none of those associations which render them so expressive to the natives.

2. It is further observable, that such sounds are beautiful only in particular tempers of mind, or when we are under the influence of such emotions as accord with the expressions which they possess. If, on the contrary, such sounds were beautiful in themselves, although in different states of mind, we might afford them different degrees of attention; yet in all situations they would be beautiful, in the same manner as in every state of mind the objects of all other senses uniformly produce their correspondent ideas. The sound of the curfew, for instance, so beautiful in moments of melancholy or tranquillity, in a joyful or even in a cheerful hour, would be directly the reverse. The sound of a waterfall, so valued amid the luxuriant scenery of summer, is scarcely observed, or, if observed, simply disagreeable amid the rigours of winter. The sound of the hunting horn, which is so extremely picturesque in seasons of gaiety, would be insupportable in hours of melancholy.

It is at particular seasons only, in truth, that we are sensible to the beauty of any of the sounds before mentioned. For once that they affect us, they occur to us ten times without effect. The real and the most important business of life could not be carried on, if we were to indulge at all times our sensibility either to sublimity or beauty. It is only at those seasons, that such sounds affect us with any emotions of beauty, when we happen to be in that temper of mind, which suits with the qualities of which they are expressive. In our common hours, when we are either thoughtless or busy, we suffer them to pass without notice. If such sounds were beautiful in themselves, such variations in their *effects could not* possibly happen.

3. When such associations are dissolved, the sounds themselves cease to be beautiful. If a man of the most common taste were carried into any striking scene of an ornamented garden, and placed within the hearing of a cascade, and were told, in the midst of his enthusiasm, that what he takes for a cascade is only a deception, the sound continues the same, but the beauty of it would be irrecoverably gone. The tinkling of the sheepfold bell may be imitated by many very common sounds; but who is there who could for a moment listen to any imitation of this romantic sound? There are a great number of sounds which exactly resemble the sound of the hunting horn, and which are frequently heard also in the same scenes: when known, however, some of them are ridiculous, none beautiful. The same bell which is so strikingly beautiful in the evening, is altogether unnoticed at noon. 'The flute of a shepherd' (says Dr. Beattie, with his usual beauty of expression) 'heard at a distance, in a fine summer's day, amidst a romantic scene of groves, hills, and waters, will give rapture to the ear of the wanderer; though the tune, the instrument, and the musician be such as he could not endure in any other place.' Instances of a similar kind are so numerous, that I forbear to detail them. Upon the supposition of any original and independent beauty in sounds, such variations are altogether unaccountable.

I shall only further observe upon this subject, that when it is considered, how few sounds are beautiful amid the infinite number which occur in the scenes of nature, and that wherever they do occur, there is always some pleasing or interesting quality of which they are expressive, there arises a very strong presumption, independently of all other considerations, that the beauty of such particular sounds is derived from the qualities which they express, and not the effect of the mere sounds themselves.

PART II.—OF THE NOTES OF ANIMALS.—There are instances, I believe, both of sublimity and beauty in the notes of animals. That such sounds are associated with the qualities of the animals to which they belong, and become expressive of these qualities, cannot, I think, be denied. There are besides other associations we have with them, from their manner of life, the scenes which they usually inhabit, and the countries from which they come.

I. That the notes or cries of some animals are sublime, every one knows: the roar of the lion, the growling of bears, the howling of wolves, the scream of the eagle, &c. In all those cases, these are the notes of animals remarkable for their strength, and formidable for their ferocity. It would seem very natural, therefore, that the sublimity of such sounds should arise from the qualities of which they are expressive; and which are of a nature fitted to excite very powerful emotions in our minds.

That this is in reality the case, and that it is not the sounds themselves which have this effect, appears to be obvious from the two following considerations.

1. When we have no associations of this kind, such sounds are productive of no such emotion. There is not one of these sounds which may not be imitated in some manner or other; and which, while we are ignorant of the deception, does not produce the same emotion with the real sound: when we are undeceived, however, we are conscious of no other emotion, but that perhaps of simple pain from its loudness. The howl of the wolf is little distinguished from the howl of the dog, either in its tone or in its strength; but there is no comparison between their sublimity. There are few, if any, of these sounds so loud as the most common of all sounds, the lowing of a cow: yet this is the very reverse of sublimity. Imagine this sound, on the contrary, expressive of fierceness or strength, and there can be no doubt that it would become sublime. The hooting of the owl at midnight, or amid ruins, is strikingly sublime. The same sound at noon, or during the day, is trifling or ludicrous. The scream of the eagle is simply disagreeable, when the bird is either tamed or confined; it is sublime only, when it is heard amid rocks and deserts, and when it is expressive to us of liberty and independence, and savage majesty. The neighing of a war-horse in the field of battle, or of a young and untamed horse when at large among mountains, is powerfully sublime. The same sound in a cart-horse, or a horse in the stable, is simply indifferent, if not disagreeable. No sound is more absolutely mean, than the grunting of swine. The same sound in the wild boar, an animal remarkable both for fierceness and strength, is sublime. The memory of the reader will supply many other instances.

2. The sublimity of such sounds corresponds not to their nature, as sounds, but to the nature of the qualities they signify. Sounds of all kinds are sublime, in proportion as they are expressive of power, or fierceness, or strength, or any other quality capable of producing strong emotions, in the animals which they distinguish. There are many instances, undoubtedly, where loud cries are sublime; but there are many also, where such notes are very far from being so. The lowing of cows, the braying of the ass, the scream of the peacock, and many other inoffensive birds, are only mean or disagreeable.

Low or feeble sounds, in the same manner, are generally considered as the contrary of sublime; yet there are also many instances where such sounds are strongly sublime—when they distinguish the notes of fierce, or dangerous, or powerful animals. There is not a sound so generally contemptible as that which we distinguish by the name of hissing; yet this is the sound appropriated to serpents, and the greater part of poisonous reptiles—and, as such, is extremely sublime. The *noise of the rattlesnake* (that most dangerous animal of all his tribe),

is very little different from the noise of a child's plaything, yet who will deny its sublimity! The growl of the tiger resembles the purring of a cat: the one is sublime, the other insignificant. Nothing can be more trifling than the sound produced by that little animal, which among the common people is called the death-watch: yet many a bold heart hath felt its power. The inhabitants of modern Europe would smile, if they were asked if there were any sublimity in the notes of chickens, or swallows, or magpies; yet, under the influence of ancient superstition, when such animals were considered as ominous, the bravest among the people have trembled at their sound. The superstitions of other countries afford innumerable instances of the same kind.

If these illustrations are just, it should seem that the sublimity of the notes of animals is to be ascribed to the associations we connect with them, and not to any original fitness in the mere sounds themselves to produce this emotion.

II.—That the beauty of the notes or cries of animals arises from the same cause, or from the qualities of which they are expressive to us, may perhaps be obvious from considerations equally familiar.

It seems at least very difficult to account for the instances of such sounds which are universally reckoned beautiful, if we consider the sounds themselves as the causes of this emotion. The number of notes is as various as the different species of animals; and, amid these, there are a thousand instances where similar sounds are by no means productive of similar effects; and where, although the difference to the ear is extremely small, there is yet a great difference in their capacity of producing such emotions. If, on the contrary, we consider the source of their beauty as consisting in the pleasing or affecting qualities with which such sounds are associated, we have an easy solution of the difficulty, and which will be found at the same time perfectly to agree with the facts.

It would lead to a very long and very unnecessary inquiry, if I were to attempt to enumerate the various notes of this kind that are beautiful, and the different associations we have with them. That with many such sounds we have in fact such associations, is a matter, I apprehend, so conformable to every man's experience, that it would be superfluous to attempt to prove it.

There is indeed one class of animals of which the notes are in a singular degree objects of beauty—I mean birds; and for this we may assign very sufficient reasons. First. Such notes approach much nearer than any other to the tones of the human voice, and are therefore much more strongly expressive to us of such qualities as we are affected by. Secondly. These animals are, much more than any other, *the objects of our* interest and regard; not only from our greater *acquaintance with* them, and from the minuteness and delicacy of

their forms, which renders them in some measure the objects of tenderness; but chiefly from their modes of life, and from the little domestic arrangements and attachments which we observe among them so much more strongly than among any other animals, and which indicate more affecting and endearing qualities in the animals themselves, than in any others we know. That we have such associations with birds is very obvious, from the use which is made of their instincts and manner of life in the poetical compositions of all nations.

That it is from such associations the beauty of the notes of animals arises, may appear from the following considerations.

1. They who have no such associations feel no emotion of beauty from them. A peasant would laugh if he were asked if the call of a goat, or the bleat of a sheep, or the lowing of a cow, were beautiful; yet in certain situations all of these are undoubtedly so. A child shows no symptom of admiration at those sounds which are most affecting in natural scenery to other people. Every one will recollect in what total indifference his early years were passed to that multitude of beautiful sounds which occur in the country; and I believe, if we attend to it sufficiently, it will be found that the period when we became sensible to their beauty was when we first began to feel them as expressive, either from our own observation of nature, or from the perusal of books of poetry. In the same manner, they who travel into very distant countries are at first insensible to the beauty which the natives of those countries ascribe to the notes of the animals belonging to them, obviously from their not having yet acquired the associations which are the foundation of their beauty. The notes which are sacred from any kind of superstition, are beautiful only to those who are under the dominion of that superstition. A foreigner does not distinguish any beauty in the note of the stork. To the Hollander, however, to whom that bird is the object of a very popular and very pleasing superstition, this note is singularly beautiful.

2. Such sounds as are, either from experience or from imagination, associated with certain qualities capable of producing emotion, are beautiful only when they are perceived in those tempers of mind which are favourable to these emotions. Instances of this are very numerous. The bleating of a lamb is beautiful in a fine day in spring: in the depth of winter it is very far from being so. The lowing of a cow at a distance, amid the scenery of a pastoral landscape in summer, is extremely beautiful: in a farmyard it is absolutely disagreeable. The hum of the beetle is beautiful in a fine summer evening, as appearing to suit the stillness and repose of that pleasing season: in the noon of day it is perfectly indifferent. The twitter of the swallow is beautiful in the morning, and seems to be expressive of the cheerfulness of that time: at any other hour it is quite insignificant. Even the song of the nightingale, so wonderfully charming in the twilight, or at night,

is altogether disregarded during the day; in so much so, that it has given rise to the common mistake that this bird dos not sing but at night. If such notes were beautiful in themselves, independently of associations, they would necessarily at all times be beautiful.

3. In this, as in other cases before mentioned, when such associations are destroyed, the beauty of the sounds ceases to be felt. The call of a goat, for instance, among rocks, is strikingly beautiful, as expressing wildness and independence. In a farmyard, or in a common enclosure, it is very far from being so. The plaintive and interesting bleat of the lamb ceases to be beautiful, whenever it ceases to be the sign of infancy, and the call for that tenderness which the infancy of all animals so naturally demands. There is a bird that imitates the notes of all other birds with great accuracy. Such imitations, however, are not in the least beautiful in it. There are people, in the same manner, who imitate the song of birds with surprising dexterity. It is the imitation, however, in such a case, that alone pleases us, and not the notes themselves. It is possible (according to the curious experiments of Mr. Barrington) to teach a bird of any species the notes of any other species. It may, however, I think, very justly be doubted, whether the acquired notes would be equally beautiful. The connexion we observe between particular birds, and the peculiar scenes in nature which they inhabit, and the different seasons at which they appear, and the great difference in their instincts and manner of life, render their notes expressive to us of very dissimilar characters; and we accordingly distinguish them by epithets expressive of this variety. The wildness of the linnet, the tenderness of the redbreast, the pertness of the sparrow, the cheerfulness of the lark, the softness of the bullfinch, the plaintiveness of the nightingale, the melancholy of the owl, are expressions in general use; and the associations we thus connect with them, very obviously determine the character or expression of their notes. By the artificial education above mentioned, all these associations would be destroyed; and, as far as I am able to judge, all, or at least a great part of the beauty we feel from their songs. It is in the same manner that we are generally unhappy, instead of being delighted with the song of a bird in the cage. It is somewhat like the smile of grief, which is much more dreadful than tears, or like the playfulness of an infant amid scenes of sorrow. It is difficult therefore to say, whether in this cruel practice there is a greater want of taste or of humanity; and there could be in fact no excuse for it, if there were not a kind of tenderness excited towards them, from the reflection that they are altogether dependent upon our benevolence, and a natural gratitude awakened, by the exertions they make for our pleasure.

I forbear to produce any further illustrations on this subject. From *those that have* been produced, it seems to me that we have sufficient

ground for concluding, that, of those sounds which have been considered, the sounds that occur in the scenes of nature, and the sounds produced by animals, the sublimity or beauty arises from the qualities of which they are considered as the signs or expressions, and not from any original fitness in the sounds themselves to produce such emotions.

I have only further to add, that, upon the principle of the absolute and independent sublimity or beauty of sounds, it is very difficult to account for the different sounds which have been mentioned as productive of these emotions. There is certainly no resemblance as sounds, between the noise of thunder and the hissing of a serpent,—between the growling of a tiger and the explosion of gunpowder,—between the scream of an eagle, and the shouting of a multitude; yet all of these are sublime. In the same manner, there is as little resemblance between the tinkling of the sheep-fold bell, and the murmuring of the breeze,—between the hum of the beetle, and the song of the lark,—between the twitter of the swallow, and the sound of the curfew; yet all of these are beautiful. Upon the principle which I endeavour to illustrate, they are all perfectly accountable.

PART III.—OF THE TONES OF THE HUMAN VOICE.—There is a similar sublimity or beauty felt in particular notes or tones of the human voice.

That such sounds are associated in our imaginations, with the qualities of mind of which they are in general expressive, and that they naturally produce in us the conception of these qualities, is a fact so obvious, that there is no man who must not have observed it. There are some philosophers who consider these as the natural signs of passion or affection, and who believe that it is not from experience, but by means of an original faculty, that we interpret them: and this opinion is supported by great authorities. Whether this is so, or not, in the present inquiry is of no very great importance; since, although it should be denied that we understand such signs instinctively, it cannot be denied that, very early in infancy, this association is formed, and that our opinions and conduct are regulated by it.

That the beauty or sublimity of such tones arises from the nature of the qualities they express, and not from the nature of the sounds themselves, may appear from the following observations.

1. Such sounds are beautiful or sublime, only as they express passions or affections which excite our sympathy. There are a great variety of tones in the human voice, yet all these tones are not beautiful. If we inquire what are the particular tones which are so, it will universally be found, that they are such as are expressive of pleasing or interesting affections. The tones peculiar to anger, peevishness, malice, envy, *misanthropy*, deceit, &c., are neither agreeable nor beau-

tiful. The tone of good nature, though very agreeable, is not beautiful but at particular seasons—because the quality itself is in general rather the source of complacence than pleasure; we regret the want of it, but we do not much enjoy its presence. On the contrary, the tones peculiar to hope, joy, humility, gentleness, modesty, melancholy, &c., though all extremely different, are all beautiful; because the qualities they express are all the objects of interest and approbation. In the same manner, the tones peculiar to magnanimity, fortitude, self-denial, patience, resignation, &c., are all sublime; and for a similar reason. This coincidence of the beauty and sublimity of the tones of the human voice, with those qualities of mind that are interesting or affecting to us, if it is not a formal proof, is yet a strong presumption, that it is from the expression of such qualities that these sounds derive their sublimity or beauty.

2. The effect of such sounds in producing these emotions, instead of being permanent, is limited by the particular temper of mind we happen to be in, or by the coincidence between that temper, and the peculiar qualities of which such sounds are expressive. To most men, for instance, the tone of hope is beautiful. To a man in despair, I presume it would be far from doing so. To a man in grief, the tone of cheerfulness is simply painful. The tone of indignation, though in particular situations strongly sublime, to a man of a quiet and placid temper is unpleasant. To men of an ardent and sanguine character, the tone of patience is contemptible. To peevish and irritable spirits, the voice of humility, so peculiarly beautiful, is provoking. Such observations may be extended to many diversities of passion: and it may still further be remarked, that those sounds in the human voice, which are most beautiful or most sublime to us, are always those that are expressive of the qualities of mind which, from our particular constitutions or habits, we are most disposed to be affected by. If the beauty or sublimity of such tones were independent of the qualities of mind we thus associate with them, such diversities could not happen; and the same sounds would produce uniformly the same emotions, as the same colours or the same smells produce uniformly the sames ensations.

3. Similar tones, in this case, do not produce similar emotions, as should seem to happen if these effects were produced by the mere sounds themselves. There is little affinity, for instance, between the low and depressed tone of grief, and the shrill and piercing tone of joy; yet both are beautiful. There is little resemblance between the loud shout of rage, and the low placid tone of patience; yet both are, in many cases, sublime. The tone of peevishness is not very different from the tone of melancholy; yet the one is beautiful, the other positively disagreeable. The tone of pusillanimity is little distinguishable from the tone of patience; but how different are the effects they pro-

duce upon our minds!—Observations of this kind, it is in the power of every one to extend.

4. Whenever these tones are counterfeited, or whenever they cease to be the signs of those qualities of mind of which we have generally found them significant, they immediately cease either to be sublime or beautiful. Every one must have observed, that this is the effect of mimickry. Wherever in the same manner, any species of deceit is used; or where we know that these tones are employed, without the existence of the correspondent passions, we no longer feel them as beautiful or sublime. If the sounds themselves were the causes of these emotions, whatever we might think of the person, the sounds themselves would continue to produce the emotions either of sublimity or beauty—in the same manner as the most absurd misapplication of colours, never disturbs our perception of them as colours.

5. There is yet a further consideration, which may perhaps more clearly illustrate this opinion, viz., that the beauty or sublimity of such sounds in the human voice, altogether depends on our opinion of the propriety or impropriety of the affections which they express. We know, either from nature or from experience, that particular sounds or tones are the expression of particular passions and affections; and the perception of such sounds is immediately accompanied with the belief of such affections in the person from whom they proceed. But it is only from actual observation or inquiry, that we can know what is the cause of these affections. Our sympathy, our interest, it is plain, depends on the nature of this connexion,—on our opinion of the propriety or impropriety of such affections in such circumstances. All this, however, does not in any degree affect the nature of the sound, which is still the same, whether the affection be proper or improper. It is very obvious, however, that our sense of the beauty or sublimity of such sounds, depends on our opinion of this propriety. No tone of passion or affection is beautiful, with which we do not sympathize. The tone of joy, for instance, is beautiful, in most cases where it is heard. Suppose we find, that such a sound proceeds from some very trifling or ridiculous cause, our sense of its beauty is instantly destroyed with our opinion of its propriety. The tone of melancholy, or moderated grief, is affecting and beautiful beyond most others. Assign some frivolous reason for it, and instantly it becomes contemptible. The tone of patience is sublime in a great degree. Tell us that it is pusillanimity, and its effect is instantly gone. The high imperious note of rage is often sublime. A trifling cause renders it simply painful. The same observation may be extended to the tones of all our passions. It is, I conceive, extremely difficult, if not impossible, to account for this change of emotion, on the principle of the original and independent beauty of such sounds.

With regard to the human voice, however, it is to be observed,

that besides all this, there is also a beauty in particular degrees of the same tones. Although the expression of the different passions is the same as in all men, yet it necessarily happens that there is a sensible difference in the degree or character of these similar sounds. There is no man of any delicacy of organs, who must not often have been sensible of such differences. These also are expressive to us of several qualities. They are, in the first place, expressive of the perfection or imperfection of the organs of speech, and of the health or indisposition of the person; circumstances which often determine in a great degree, when either of these expressions are strong, the pleasure or pain we have in their conversation. Secondly. They are expressive also of the temper or character of mind. As we are naturally led to judge of the character of the person from the peculiar tones of his voice, and to believe that such passions have the principal dominion of his mind, which have the most prevalent expression in his voice, so we are led in the same way to judge of the degree or force of these passions by the degree or strength of such tones in his voice. This kind of inference is so natural, that there is perhaps no person who has not made it. That the beauty of such chastened degrees of sound arises from such associations is apparent; as it is expressive to us of moderation and self-command,—as it expresses habit more than immediate impulse,—as it is peculiar to such tones only as are expressive of affecting passions or dispositions of mind,—as it is felt alone by those who are affected by such dispositions,—and as it is beautiful only in those cases where this temperance of emotion, of which it is the sign, is considered as proper. I will forbear, therefore, any further illustration of it.

The observations which I have offered on the subject of simple sounds are perhaps sufficient to show that the sublimity and beauty of these sounds arises, in all cases from the qualities with which we have observed them connected, and of which they appear to us as the signs or expressions: and that no sounds in themselves are fitted by the constitution of our nature to produce these emotions.

It is natural, however, to suppose that in this, as in every other case, our experience should gradually lead to the formation of some general rules with regard to this expression; and that different sounds should appear to us to have a difference of character, according to the nature of the qualities with which we most frequently find them conjoined. This supposition will appear more probable when we consider, not only that the diversities of sounds are few, and consequently that rules of this kind can be more easily formed; but still more that these diversities of sounds are the immediate expressions of different qualities of mind in the human voice, and consequently that their character becomes more certain and definite.

I believe, in fact, that something of this kind takes place early in

life, and that, long before we are able to attend to their formation, we have formed certain general associations with all the great diversities of sound, and that, in after life, they continue to be generally expressive of these characters.

To enumerate these general expressions is a very delicate, as well as a very difficult task. I hazard, therefore, the following observations only as hints for the prosecution of the subject; and as I am sensible of their imperfection, I am willing to rest no conclusion upon them.

The great divisions of sound are into loud and low, grave and acute long and short, increasing and diminishing. The two first divisions are expressive in themselves: the two last only in conjunction with others.

1. Loud sound is connected with ideas of power and danger. Many objects in nature which have such qualities are distinguished by such sounds; and this association is further confirmed from the human voice, in which all violent and impetuous passions are expressed in loud tones.

2. Low sound has a contrary expression, and is connected with ideas of weakness, gentleness, and delicacy. This association takes its rise not only from the observation of inanimate nature, or of animals, where, in a great number of cases, such sounds distinguish objects with such qualities, but particularly from the human voice, where all gentle, or delicate, or sorrowful affections, are expressed by such tones.

3. Grave sound is connected with ideas of moderation, dignity, solemnity, &c., principally, I believe, from all moderate, or restrained, or chastened affections being distinguished by such tones in the human voice.

4. Acute sound is expressive of pain, or fear, or surprise, &c., and generally operates by producing some degree of astonishment. This association, also, seems principally to arise from our experience of such connexions in the human voice.

5. Long or lengthened sound seems to me to have no expression in itself, but only to signify the continuance of that quality which is signified by other qualities of sound. A loud or a low, a grave or an acute sound prolonged, expresses to us no more than the continuance of the quality which is generally signified by such sounds.

6. Short or abrupt sound has a contrary expression, and signifies the sudden cessation of the quality thus expressed.

7. Increasing sound signifies, in the same manner, the increase of the quality expressed—as,

8. Decreasing sound signifies the gradual diminution of such qualities.

I shall leave to the reader to attend to the diversity of expression which arises from the *different* combination of these diversities of sound.

The most sublime of these sounds appears to me to be a loud, grave, lengthened and increasing sound. The least sublime, a low, acute, abrupt, or decreasing sound. The most beautiful, a low, grave, and decreasing sound. The least beautiful, a loud, acute, lengthened and increasing sound.

Such are the few general principles that, as far as I can judge, take place, with regard to the sublimity or beauty of sounds. The innumerable exceptions that there are to every one of these rules, afford a sufficient proof, that this sublimity or beauty does not arise from the sounds themselves. Where, however, any new sound occurs, it is, I think, by its approach to one or other of these classes that we determine its sublimity or beauty.

SEC. II.—OF COMPOSED SOUNDS, OR MUSIC.—I.—In the preceding illustrations, I have considered only simple sounds as producing the emotions of sublimity or beauty.

Sounds, however, are capable of being united by certain laws, and of forming a whole. To such a composition of sounds we give the name of music; an art, confessedly, of great power, in producing emotions both of sublimity and beauty, and the source of one of the first and purest pleasures of which our nature is susceptible.

Upon this subject, I shall beg leave to offer a few observations, although it is with great diffidence that I speak upon an art of which I have no theoretical knowledge, and of which I can judge only from the effect that it produces on myself.

The essence of music consists in continued sound. The same sound, however, when continued, has no beauty, further than as a simple sound, and, when long continued, becomes positively disagreeable: music, therefore, must necessarily consist in the composition of different sounds.

The succession or composition of all different sounds is not equally pleasing. By a peculiar law of our nature, there are certain sounds of which the union is agreeable, and others of which the union is disagreeable. There is therefore a relation between sounds, established by nature, which cannot be violated without pain. Music, therefore, as an art intended to produce pleasure, must consist in the composition of related sounds.

These observations are sufficiently obvious. There are, however, two other circumstances in the succession of sounds, necessary to constitute music.

1. The mere succession of related sounds is not in itself pleasing. *Although* the succession of any two related sounds is agreeable, yet a *whole series* of such sounds, in which no other relation was observed *but the relation* between individual sounds, would be absolutely dis-

agreeable. To render such a series pleasing, it is necessary that it should possess unity, or that we should discern a relation not only between the individual sounds, but also among the whole number of sounds that constitute the series. Although every word in language is significant, and there is a necessary relation among words, established by the rules of grammar; yet it is obviously possible to arrange words according to grammatical rules, which yet shall possess no meaning. In the same manner, a series of sounds may be composed, according to their individual relations, which yet may possess no general relation, and from which, as we can discover no end, we can derive no pleasure. What thought is to the arrangement of words, the key, or the fundamental tone, is to the arrangement of sounds; and as the one constitutes a whole in language, by establishing a certain and definite idea, to which all the words in a sentence bear a relation, so the other constitutes a whole in music, by establishing a definite and leading sound, to which all the other sounds in the series bear a similar relation. The first circumstance, therefore, that distinguishes musical succession, is the preservation of this relation among all the individual sounds to one key or fundamental tone, which is the foundation and end of the composition.

2. The second circumstance which distinguishes musical succession, is the regularity or uniformity of that succession. In natural events, succession without regularity, is confusion; and, wherever art or design is supposed, is positively disagreeable. In music, therefore, as an art designed to please, regularity or uniformity is absolutely necessary. The most pleasing succession of sounds, without the preservation of this regularity, or what is commonly called time, every one knows, is positively displeasing. For this purpose, every succession of sounds is supposed to be divided into certain equal intervals, which, whether they comprehend more or fewer notes, occupy the same space of time in the succession of these notes. To preserve this uniformity, if there are few sounds in this interval, these sounds must be prolonged to occupy the whole space of time. If there are many, they must be sounded quickly for the same reason. The one constitutes what is called slow, the other what is called quick time in common language. In both cases, however, the space or portion of time allotted to each interval is uniformly the same, and constitutes the only regularity of which sounds in succession are capable. A regular or uniform succession of sounds, therefore, related to one key or fundamental note, may be considered as constituting musical succession, and as distinguishing it from all other successions of sound. The accurate perception both of this regularity, and of this relation, constitutes that faculty which is generally called a good or a musical ear.

II.—If, therefore, we consider music as such a succession of sounds as I *have now described,* the two circumstances which distinguish or

determine the nature or character of every composition, are, the nature of the key, and the nature of the progress; the nature of the fundamental and governing sound, and the nature, or (as it is commonly called) the time, of the succession.

With both of these characteristics of musical composition, I apprehend that we have many associations.

The key or fundamental tone of every composition, from its relation to the tones of the human voice, is naturally expressive to us of those qualities or affections of mind which are signified by such sounds. It is perhaps unnecessary to offer any illustration of this, because it is so obvious to every man's observation. The relation of such tones in music to the expression of the qualities of mind is indeed so strong, that all musicians understand what keys or what tones are fitted for the expression of those affections, which it is within the reach of music to express. It is also observable, that they who are most unacquainted with music, are yet able immediately to say, what is the affection which any particular key is fitted to express. Whether any piece of music is beautiful, or not, may be a subject of dispute, and very often is so; but whether the sounds of which it is composed are gay or solemn, are cheerful or melancholy, are elevating or depressing, there is seldom any dispute.

That the time of musical composition is also expressive to us of various affecting or interesting qualities, can scarcely be disputed. In all ages, quick time, or a rapid succession of sounds, has been appropriated to the expression of mirth and gaiety; slow time, or a slow succession of sounds, to the expression of melancholy or sadness. All the passions or affections, therefore, which partake of either of these ingredients, may be generally expressed by such circumstances in the composition; and the different degrees of such movements may, in the same manner, express such affections as partake of any intermediate nature between these extremes. In what manner the conception of such affections is associated with such circumstances in the progress of sound, it is not my business to explain. It is sufficient that the fact itself is acknowledged. I cannot avoid, however, observing, that there is a very strong analogy, not only between the progress of musical sounds, and the progress of sounds in the human voice, in the case of particular passions; but that there is also a similar analogy between such progress in sounds, and the progress of thought in the case of such passions. Under the influence of pleasing or agreeable passions, the articulation is quick; in the case of contrary passions it is slow; and so strong is this expression, that we are disposed to judge of the passion any person is affected with, although we do not hear the words he utters, merely from the slowness or rapidity of his articulation. It is observable, in the same manner, that different passions have an influence upon the progress of our thoughts, and that they

operate very sensibly either in accelerating or retarding this progress. All the passions which belong to pleasure, are attended with a rapid succession of thoughts, and seem to give an unusual degree of vigour to our imagination. The passions, on the contrary, which belong to pain, produce, in general, a slow and languid succession of thought, and seem to depress our imagination below its usual tone. This result is so obvious, that every person must have observed it even in conversation.

The progress of musical sounds, therefore, may very naturally express to us the nature or character of particular passions; not only from the analogy between such progress of sounds, and the progress of thought; but still more from its being in a great measure the sign of such affections of mind, by making use of the same sounds or tones, and the same varieties in the progress of these sounds, which are in real life the signs of such affections in the human voice. Whether these observations account for the associations we have with musical time, or not, is at present a matter of no consequence, as the fact itself is sufficiently certain. The appropriation of particular time, to particular emotions, has taken place in every age and country; is understood by every man; and is not the less certain, though no account can be given of the reason of it.

It is in thus being able to express both the tone of passion or affection, and that progress of thought or sentiment which belongs to such affections, that, in as far as I am able to judge, the real foundation of musical expression consists. It is far beyond the bounds which I prescribe myself in these observations, to enter into any minute investigation of the different expressions which such sounds, and such compositions of sounds in general possess. But if the reader will recollect, what are the distinct associations which it has formerly been observed we have with sounds or tones, as loud or soft, grave or acute, and the particular associations which it has now been observed we have with the different progressions of sound, as quick, or moderate, or slow; and will further attend to the possible number of ways in which these different characteristics of music may be combined, he will be fully sensible both of the different emotions which it is in the power of music to express, and of the great variety which it affords in the expression of these emotions.

If I am not mistaken, the real extent of musical expression coincides in a great degree with this account of it. These signs in the human voice are general signs. They express particular classes of passion or emotion, but they do not express any particular passion. If we had no other means of intercourse or of information, we might from such signs infer, that the person was elevated or depressed, gay or solemn, cheerful or plaintive, joyous or sad; but we could not, I think, infer, what was the *particular* passion which produced these expressions

Music, which can avail itself of these signs only, can express nothing more particular than the signs themselves. It will be found, accordingly, that it is within this limit that musical expression is really confined; that such classes of emotion it can perfectly express; but that when it goes beyond this limit, it ceases to be either expressive or beautiful. The general emotions of gaiety, elevation, solemnity, melancholy, or sadness, it is every day found to express; and with regard to such general expressions there is never any mistake; but when it attempts to go further, when it attempts to express particular passions, ambition, fortitude, pity, love, gratitude, &c., it either fails altogether in its effect, or is obliged to have recourse to the assistance of words to render it intelligible. 'It is in general true' (says Dr Beattie) 'that poetry is the most immediate and the most accurate interpreter of music. Without this auxiliary, a piece of the best music, heard for the first time, might be said to mean something, but we should not be able to say what. It might incline the heart to sensibility; but poetry or language would be necessary to improve that sensibility into a real emotion, by fixing the fancy upon some definite and affecting ideas. A fine instrumental symphony, well performed, is like an oration delivered with propriety, but in an unknown tongue; it may affect us a little, but conveys no definite feeling. We are alarmed, perhaps, or melted, or soothed; but it is very imperfectly, because we know not why. The singer, by taking up the same air, and applying words to it, immediately translates the oration into our own language. Then all uncertainty vanishes; the fancy is filled with determinate ideas; and determinate emotions take possession of the heart.'—*Essay upon Poetry and Music, p.* 1. *ch.* vi.

Nor is this confining the expression of which music is capable, within narrower limits than is consistent with our experience of its effects. Although its real power consists in its imitation of those signs of emotion or passion which take place in the human voice, yet from its nature it possesses advantages which these signs have not, and which render it, within these limits, one of the most powerful means which can be made use of in exciting emotion. As far as I am able to judge, these advantages principally consist in the two following circumstances.

1. In that variety of sounds which it admits of, in conformity to the key, or fundamental tone. In the real expression of passion in the human voice, the sound is nearly uniform, or at least admits of very small variation. In so far, therefore, as mere sound is concerned, the tone of any passion would in a short time become unpleasing from its uniformity; and if this effect were not forgot, in our attention to the language and sentiments of the person who addresses us, would be *perceived by* every ear. In music, on the contrary, the variety of *related sounds* which may be introduced, not only prevents this un-

pleasing effect of uniformity, and preserves the emotion which the prevailing tone is of itself able to excite, but, by varying the expression of it, keeps both our attention and our imagination continually awake. The one resembles what we should feel from the passion of any person, who uniformly made use of the same words to express to us what he felt. The other, what we feel from that eloquence of passion, where new images are continually presenting themselves to the mind of the speaker, and a new source of delight is afforded to our imagination, in the perception of the agreement of those images with the emotions from which they arise. The effect of musical composition, in this light, resembles, in some measure, the progress of an oration, in which our interest is continually kept alive: and if it were possible for us, for a moment, to forget that the performer is only repeating a lesson, were it possible for us to imagine, that the sounds we hear were the immediate expressions of his own emotion, the effect of music might be conceived in some measure to approach to the effect of eloquence. To those who have felt this influence, in the degree in which, in some seasons of sensibility, it may be felt, there is no improbability in the accounts of the effects of music in early times, when the professions of poetry and music were not separated; when the bard, under the influence of some strong and present impression, accommodated his melody to the language of his own passion; and when the hearers, under the influence of the same impression, were well prepared to go along with him, in every variety of that emotion which he felt and expressed himself.

2. But, besides this, there is another circumstance in which the expression of music differs materially from the expression of natural signs, and which serves to add considerably to the strength of its effect. Such natural sounds express to us immediately, if they express at all, the emotion of the person from whom they proceed, and therefore immediately excite our own emotion. As these sounds, however, have little or no variety, and excite immediately their correspondent emotion, it necessarily happens, that they become weaker as they proceed, until at last they become positively disagreeable. In musical composition, on the contrary, as such sounds constitute a whole, and have all a relation to the key, or fundamental note in which they close, they not only afford us a satisfaction as parts of a regular whole, but, what is of much more consequence, they keep our attention continually awake, and our expectation excited, until we arrive at that fundamental tone, which is both the close of the composition, and the end of our expectation. Instead, therefore, (as in the former case), of our emotion becoming more languid as the sounds proceed, it becomes, in the case of musical composition, on the contrary, more strong. The peculiar affection we feel is kept continually increasing, by means of the expectation *which is excited* for the perfection of this whole; and

the one and the other are only gratified when we arrive at this desired and expected end.

In this respect, indeed, musical expression is in itself superior even to the expression of language: and were the passions or affections which it can express, as definite or particular, as those which can be communicated by words, it may well be doubted, whether there is any composition of words which could so powerfully affect us, as such a composition of sounds. In language, every person under the influence of passion or emotion, naturally begins with expressing the cause of his emotion; an observation which every one must have made in real life, and which might easily be confirmed by instances from dramatic poetry. In this case, our emotion is immediately at its height, and as it has no longer any assistance from curiosity, naturally cools as the speaker goes on. In music, on the contrary, the manner of this communication resembles the artful, but interesting conduct of the epic or dramatic poem, where we find ourselves at once involved in the progress of some great interest, where our curiosity is wound up to its utmost to discover the event, and where, at every step, this interest increases, from bringing us nearer to the expected end. That the effect of musical composition is similar; that while it excites emotion from the nature of the sounds, it excites also an increasing expectation and interest from the conduct of these sounds, and from their continued dependence upon the close, has, I am persuaded, been felt in the strongest manner by every person of common sensibility; and indeed is in itself extremely obvious, from the effect which is universally produced by any pathetic composition upon the audience. The increasing silence,—the impatience of interruption, which are so evident as the composition goes on,—the arts by which the performer is almost instinctively led to enhance the merit of the close, by seeming to depart from it,—the suppression of every sign of emotion till the whole is completed,—and the violence either of sensibility or applause, that are immediately displayed, whenever a full and harmonious close is produced; all testify in the strongest manner the increasing nature of the emotion, and the singular advantage which music thus possesses, in keeping the attention and the sensibility of the hearer so powerfully awake.

Such seems to me the natural effect of music on the human mind: in expressing to us those affections or emotions, which are signified by the tones of the voice, and the progress of articulate sounds; limited indeed in the reach of its imitation or expression, and far inferior to language, in being confined to the expression only of general emotions; but powerful, within those limits, beyond any other means we know, both by the variety which it can afford, and the continued *and increasing* interest which it can raise.

It is obvious, that the observations which I have now offered, relate

principally to vocal music, and to that simple species of composition which is commonly called song or air. I believe it will be found that this is, in reality, not only the most expressive species of composition, but the only one which affects the minds of uninstructed men. It is the only music of early ages, the only music of the common people, the only music which pleases us in infancy and early youth. It is a considerable time before we discern the beauties of more artificial composition, or indeed before we understand it. In such kinds of composition a young person, whatever may be his natural taste, seldom discovers any continued relation. He is disposed to divide it in his own mind into different parts—to consider it as a collection of distinct airs; and he is apt to judge of it, not as a whole, but as the separate parts of it are expressive to him or not. There is nothing, accordingly, more common, than to find young people expressing their admiration of a particular strain or division of the composition, and such strains are always the most simple, and those which approach most to the nature of airs; but it is seldom, I believe, that they are able to follow the whole of a concerto, or that they are found to express their admiration of it as a whole.

With such a species of composition, however, they who are instructed in music have many and very interesting associations. A song or an air leads us always to think of the sentiment, and seldom disposes us to think of anything else. An overture or a concerto disposes us to think of the composer. It is a work in which much invention, much judgment, and much taste may be displayed; and it may have, therefore, to those who are capable of judging of it, all that pleasing effect upon the mind, which the composition of an excellent poem or oration has upon the minds of those who are judges of such works. The qualities of skill, of novelty, of learning, of invention, of taste, may, in this manner, be expressed by such compositions; qualities, it is obvious, which are the foundation both of sublimity and beauty in other cases, and which may undoubtedly be the foundation of such characters in musical composition, even although it should have no other or more affecting expression to recommend it. Nor is this all: such compositions are not read in private, but are publicly recited. There is, therefore, the additional circumstance of the performance to be attended to; a circumstance of no mean consequence, and of which every man will acknowledge the importance, who recollects the different effects the same composition has produced on him, when performed by different people. There is, therefore, the judgment, the taste, the expression of the performer, in addition to all those different qualities of excellence which may distinguish the composition; and the whole effect is similar to that which every one has felt from any celebrated piece of poetry, when recited by an able and harmonious *declaimer*. *Even* to the very worst music, this gives an

effect, and the effect may easily be conceived when the music also is good.

III.—While music has this power in expressing some of the most interesting and affecting passions of the human mind; and is, in its more artificial state, significant to us of so many pleasing and delightful qualities, it will not, I hope, be considered as rash, if I presume to think that it is from these associations that it derives all its power in producing the emotions of sublimity or beauty; and that, wherever it does produce either of these effects, it is by being expressive to us either of some interesting passion, or of some valuable and pleasing quality in the composition or the performance.

When any musical composition affects us with the emotions either of sublimity or beauty, it should seem that this effect must arise from one or other of the following causes. First, from the nature of the single or individual sounds which enter into the composition: secondly, from the nature of the composition itself, or from those laws which, as has before been observed, are necessary to render a succession of sounds agreeable, or to constitute music: or, thirdly, from the associations we connect with it, or the qualities of which it is expressive to us. That the beauty or sublimity of single sounds is not a quality of the sounds themselves, but arises from their expression, I have already endeavoured to illustrate. That the beauty of musical composition does not arise from the second of those causes, or from the circumstances of the composition itself, and that it is altogether to be ascribed to the qualities of which it is expressive to us, I am disposed to conclude, from the following considerations.

1. If the beauty of music arose from the regular composition of sounds, according to those laws which are necessary to constitute music or an agreeable succession of sounds, it would necessarily follow, that every composition, where these laws were observed, would be beautiful. Every man however knows, that there is a very wide distinction between music, and beautiful music. If a composition is expressive of no sentiment, a common hearer feels no beauty from it: If it is quite common, and has neither novelty nor skill in it, a connoisseur in music feels as little: If it has neither one nor the other, all the world pronounce it bad music. Yet such a composition may be perfectly regular, may be in obedience to the strictest laws of composition; and will give to every one that inferior pleasure, which arises from a regular succession of sounds. As there is therefore a very evident distinction between that mechanical pleasure which we receive from mere music, and that delight which we feel from music when beautiful or sublime, it is obvious, that the mere regular composition of related sounds, is not the cause of the emotions either of sublimity or beauty.

If the beauty of music arose from any of those qualities, either of *sound, or of the* composition of sounds, which are immediately per-

ceivable by the ear, it is obvious that this would be expressed in language, and that the terms by which such music was characterized, would be significant of some quality or qualities discernible by the ear. If, on the contrary, this beauty arises from the interesting or affecting qualities of which it is expressive to us, such qualities, in the same manner, ought in common language, to be assigned as the causes of this emotion; and the terms by which such music is characterized ought to be significant of such qualities. That the last is the case, I think there can be no dispute. The terms plaintive, tender, cheerful, gay, elevating, solemn, &c., are not only constantly applied to every kind of music that is either sublime or beautiful; but it is in fact by such terms only that men ever characterize the compositions from which they receive such emotions. If any man were asked what was it that rendered such an air so beautiful; he would immediately answer, because it was plaintive, solemn, cheerful, &c.; but he never would think of describing its peculiar nature as a composition of sounds. In the same manner, if he were accounting to any person for the beauty or sublimity of any composition—if he were to describe it in the most accurate way possible, as having particular characters of composition, he might indeed make him wonder at his learning, but he would leave him as ignorant as before, with regard to the source of its beauty. Were he to tell him, on the other hand, that it was expressive of melancholy, gaiety, or tenderness, he would make him understand at once the reason of his emotion. If the beauty or sublimity of music arose from the laws of its composition, the very reverse of all this would obviously be the case.

It is observable, in the same manner, that even they who are best acquainted with the principles of composition, and who are most disposed to forget the end, in attention to the rules of the science, yet never think of expressing the beauty or sublimity of any piece of music, by terms significant of its nature as a composition, but by such as are significant of some pleasing or interesting association. If they forget the expression of music, they never forget the merits of the composer. When they speak, therefore, of the sublimity or beauty of any such composition, if they are further questioned upon the subject, it will always be found, that it is either the learning, the invention, or the taste which it displays, that they assign as the foundation of their admiration; or some other quality, either in the composition or performance, perfectly distinct from the mere qualities either of sound or composition. This universal language of mankind, is not only a proof of the connexion between the beauty and sublimity of music, and the expressions which it conveys; but it is impossible that this language should ever have been either employed, or understood, if the sublimity or beauty of music were independant of such expressions.

3. *If the beauty or sublimity* of music depended solely upon the

nature of its composition, and was independant of the qualities of which it is expressive, it would necessarily happen, that the same compositions must always be beautiful or sublime, which once were so; and that in every situation they must produce the same emotion, in the same manner as every other object of sense uniformly produces its correspondent sensation. The truth is, however, that no such thing takes place; and that, on the contrary, music is then only beautiful or sublime, when it is accommodated to the emotion which it is intended to express. If the passion of revenge, for instance, were expressed by the most beautiful composition of sounds conceivable, which either naturally, or from habit, were considered as expressive of tenderness, every man, instead of being affected with its beauty, would laugh at its absurdity. In the same manner, if love or tenderness were expressed by any sounds, or composition of sounds, generally appropriated to the expression of rage, or revenge, however sublime they might be according to their own expression, they would undoubtedly cease to be so by such an appropriation. Instances of the same kind might easily be multiplied. If we could suppose, that, by a miracle, the present system of sounds in the human voice were altogether changed; that the tones which now express mirth, should then express melancholy; the sounds which now express rage, should then express tenderness, &c., and that a similar revolution should at the same time take place in the expression of the progress of sounds, I think every man will allow, that the whole system of music must of necessity be changed; that a new music must arise, accommodated to this change in the system of expressive sounds; and that if it were not changed, instead of affording us any emotions of beauty or sublimity, it would either be unintelligible, or absolutely absurd: yet, in such a case, all that arises from the mere mechanical structure of sounds would remain, all that is immediately perceived by the ear, either in sound itself, or in the composition of sound, would have undergone no revolution. There cannot well be a stronger proof, that the beauty or sublimity of music arises from the qualities which it expresses, and not from the means by which they are expressed.

4. It is observable, that the beauty or sublimity of music is felt by those who have no perception of the relation of sounds, either in point of tune or time, and who consequently must be unconscious of any pleasure that arises from the mere composition of sounds. Every one who will take the trouble of inquiring, will find many people who have (as it is generally called) no musical ear, who are unable to learn the simplest tune, and who can scarcely distinguish one tune from another, who are yet sensible to the beauty or sublimity of music, and who feel delight from different kinds of composition. The want of a musical ear is not uncommon; but I believe there is no instance of *any person who is* insensible either to the expression of different tones

in the human voice, or who is not differently affected by the different progress of sounds. In such cases, although music has not the same extent of expression to them, that it has to those who are born with a good ear, yet still it has some expression; and the proof of it is, that although they cannot tell whether any note is just or not, or whether the time of any composition is perfectly preserved, they can still tell whether a song is gay or plaintive, whether fitted to inspire mirth or melancholy. They have therefore that degree of delight from it, which the scenes of nature usually inspire, where a general but indistinct relation is observed to some interesting or affecting qualities, and where, in consequence of this relation, such scenes naturally tend to excite or to encourage a correspondent emotion; but they are insensible to that greater delight, which, as has already been shown, every man of a good ear feels, both from the variety of this expression, and from the continued and increasing interest which it awakens. If the sublimity or beauty of music arose from the discernment of such relations as constitute the laws of composition, it is obvious that they who are incapable of discerning such relations, would be incapable, at the same time, of discovering either its sublimity or beauty.

In the preceding observations, I have considered only the permanent associations we have with musical composition, or the expressions which are everywhere felt both in the tone and the time of such successions of sound, from their analogy to the character and progress of sound in the human voice. With music, however, we have often many accidental associations, both individual and national; and the influence of such associations upon our opinions of the beauty or sublimity of music might be shown from many considerations. On the one hand, from the dependence of the beauty of music upon the temporary or habitual dispositions of our minds,—from the different effect which is produced by the same composition, according to the associations we happen to connect with it,—and from the tendency which all national music has to render those who are accustomed to it insensible to the beauty of any foreign music, from their association of particular sentiments with peculiar characters or modes of composition: and, on the other hand, from the influence of individual or national associations, in increasing the sublimity or beauty of music, both by increasing its natural expressions, and by rendering these expressions more definite and precise. I am unwilling, however, to swell these very imperfect remarks, by illustrations which every one can so easily prosecute for himself. From the whole, I am induced to conclude, that music is productive to us of two distinct and separate pleasures:—

1. Of that mechanical pleasure, which by the constitution of our nature accompanies the perception of a regular succession of related sounds:

2. Of that *pleasure which* such compositions of sound may produce,

either by the expression of some pathetic or interesting affection, or by being the sign of some pleasing or valuable quality, either in the composition or the performance.

That it is to this last source the beauty or sublimity of music is to be ascribed, or that it is beautiful or sublime only when it is expressive of some pleasing or interesting quality, I hope is evident from the preceding observations.

Chapter III.—Of the Objects of Sight.

The greatest part of the external objects, in which we discover sublimity or beauty, are such as are perceived by the sense of sight. It has even been imagined by some philosophers, that it is to such objects only that the name of beauty is properly applied, and that it is only from analogy that the same term is applied to the objects of our other senses. This opinion, however, seems at first sight ill-founded. The terms beauty and sublimity are applied by all men to sounds, and even sometimes to smells. In our own experience, we very often find, that the same emotion is produced by sounds, which is produced by forms or colours; and the nature of language sufficiently shows, that this is conformable also to general experience. There seems no reason therefore for limiting the objects of sublimity or beauty to the sole class of visible objects.

It must however be acknowledged, that by far the greatest number of these objects are such as we discover by means of this sense; nor does it seem difficult to assign the reason of this superiority. By the rest of our senses, we discover only single qualities of objects; but by the sense of seeing, we discover all that assemblage of qualities which constitute, in our imaginations, the peculiar nature of such objects. By our other senses, we discover, in general, such qualities, only when the bodies are in contact with us; but the sense of sight affords us a very wide field of observation, and enables us to make them the objects of attention, when they are at very considerable distances from ourselves. It is natural, therefore, that the greater power of this sense should dispose us to greater confidence in it, and that the qualities of bodies which we discover by means of it, should more powerfully impress themselves upon our imagination and memory, than those single qualities which we discover by the means of our other senses. The visible qualities of objects, accordingly, become to us not only the distinguishing characteristics of external bodies, but they become also in a great measure the signs of all their other qualities; and by recalling to our minds the qualities signified, affect *us in* some degree with the same emotion which the objects themselves *can excite.* Not only the smell of the rose, or the violet, is expressed

to us by their colours and forms; but the utility of a machine, the elegance of a design, the proportion of a column, the speed of the horse, the ferocity of the lion, even all the qualities of the human mind, are naturally expressed to us by certain visible appearances; because our experience has taught us, that such qualities are connected with such appearances; and the presence of the one immediately suggests to us the idea of the other. Such visible qualities, therefore, are gradually considered as the signs of other qualities, and are productive to us of the same emotions with the qualities they signify.

But, besides this, it is also to be observed, that by this sense, we not only discover the nature of individual objects, and therefore naturally associate their qualities with their visible appearance; but that by it also we discover the relation of objects to each other; and that hence a great variety of objects in nature become expressive of qualities which do not immediately belong to themselves, but to the objects with which we have found them connected. Thus, for instance, it is by this sense we discover that the eagle inhabits among rocks and mountains; that the red-breast leaves the woods in winter, to seek shelter and food among the dwellings of men; that the song of the nightingale is peculiar to the evening and the night, &c. In consequence of this permanent connexion, these animals acquire a character from the scenes they inhabit, or the seasons in which they appear, and are expressive to us, in some measure, of the character of these seasons and scenes. It is hence that so many objects become expressive, which perhaps in themselves would never have been so; that the curfew is so solemn from accompanying the close of day; the twitter of the swallow so cheerful, from its being heard in the morning; the bleating of sheep, the call of the goat, the lowing of kine, so beautiful from their occurring in pastoral or romantic situations; in short, that the greatest number of natural objects acquire their expression from their connexion with particular or affecting scenes.

As, in this way, the visible qualities of objects become expressive to us of all the qualities which they possess; and besides, in so many cases receive expression from their connexion with other objects, it is extremely natural that such qualities should form the greatest and most numerous class of the objects of material beauty.

I proceed to a more particular investigation of the sublimity and beauty of some of the most remarkable classes of these qualities.

SEC. I.—OF THE BEAUTY OF COLOURS.—The greatest part of colours are connected with a kind of established imagery in our minds, and are considered as expressive of many very pleasing and affecting qualities.

These associations may perhaps be included in the following enumeration; first, such as arise from the nature of the objects thus permanently coloured; secondly, such as arise from some analogy between certain colours, and certain dispositions of mind; and, thirdly, such as arise from accidental connections, whether national or particular.

1. When we have been accustomed to see any object capable of exciting emotion, distinguished by some fixed or permanent colour, we are apt to extend to the colour the qualities of the object thus coloured; and to feel from it, when separated, some degree of the same emotion which is properly excited by the object itself. Instances of this kind are within every person's observation. White, as it is the colour of day, is expressive to us of the cheerfulness or gaiety which the return of day brings. Black, as the colour of darkness, is expressive of gloom and melancholy. The colour of the heavens, in serene weather, is blue: blue is therefore expressive to us of somewhat of the same pleasing and temperate character. Green is the colour of the earth in spring: it is consequently expressive to us of some of those delightful images which we associate with that season. The colours of vegetables and minerals acquire, in the same manner, a kind of character from the character of the species which they distinguish. The expression of those colours, which are the signs of particular passions in the human countenance, and which, from this connection, derive their effect, every one is acquainted with.

2. There are many colours which derive expression from some analogy we discover between them and certain affections of the human mind. Soft or strong, mild or bold, gay or gloomy, cheerful or solemn, &c., are terms in all languages applied to colours; terms obviously metaphorical, and the use of which indicates their connection with particular qualities of mind. In the same manner, different degrees or shades of the same colour have similar characters, as strong, or temperate, or gentle, &c. In consequence of this association, which is in truth so strong, that it is to be found among all mankind, such colours derive a character from this resemblance, and produce in our minds some faint degree of the same emotion, which the qualities they express are fitted to produce.

3. Many colours acquire character from accidental association. Purple, for instance, has acquired a character of dignity, from its accidental connection with the dress of kings. The colours of ermine have a similar character from the same cause. The colours in every country which distinguish the dress of magistrates, judges, &c., acquire dignity in the same manner. Scarlet, in this country, as the colour which distinguishes the dress of the army, has, in some measure, a *character* correspondent to its employment; and it was perhaps this *association* (though unknown to himself), that induced the blind man,

mentioned by Mr. Locke, to liken his notion of scarlet to the sound of a trumpet. Every person will, in the same manner, probably recollect the particular colours which are pleasing to him, from their having been worn by people whom he loved, or from some other accidental association.

In these several ways, colours become significant to us of many interesting or affecting qualities, and excite in us some degree of the emotions which such qualities in themselves are fitted to produce. Whether some colours may not of themselves produce agreeable sensations, and others disagreeable sensations, I am not anxious to dispute: but wherever colours are felt as producing the emotion of beauty, that it is by means of their expression, and not from any original fitness in the colours themselves to produce this effect, may perhaps be obvious from the following considerations.

1. The different sentiments of mankind, with regard to the beauty of colours, are inconsistent with the opinion that such qualities are beautiful in themselves. It is impossible to infer, because any particular colour is beautiful in one country, that it will also be beautiful in another: and there are in fact many instances where the same colour produces very different opinions of beauty in different races of men. Black, to us, is in general an unpleasant colour. In Spain and in Venice, it is otherwise. Yellow is to us, at least in dress, a disagreeable colour. In China, it is the favourite colour. White is to us extremely beautiful. In China, on the contrary, it is extremely disagreeable. Instances of the same kind must have occurred to every person.

If we inquire, on the other hand, what is the reason of this difference of opinion, we shall uniformly find, that it arises from the different associations which these different people have with such colours; and that their opinion of their beauty is permanently regulated by the nature of the qualities of which they are expressive. Black is to us an unpleasant colour, because it is the colour appropriated to mourning. In Venice and Spain, it is the colour which distinguishes the dress of the great. Yellow is, in China, the imperial colour, and sacred to the emperor and his property: it is therefore associated with ideas of magnificence and royalty. Among us it has no distinct association, and is therefore beautiful or otherwise, only according to its degree or shade. White is beautiful to us in a supreme degree, as emblematical both of innocence and cheerfulness. In China, on the other hand, it is the colour appropriated to mourning, and consequently, very far from being generally beautiful. In the same manner, wherever any peculiar colours are permanently favourite, there will always be found some pleasing association which the people have with *that* colour, and of which they, in some measure, consider *it as significant.*

2. It is further observable, that no colours, in fact, are beautiful, but such as are expressive to us of pleasing or interesting qualities. All colours obviously are not beautiful: the same colours are beautiful only when they are expressive of such qualities; and, in general, I believe it will be found, that among all the variety of colours we are acquainted with, those only are beautiful which have similar expressions.

The common colours, for instance, of many indifferent things which surround us, of the earth, of stone, of wood, &c., have no kind of beauty, and are never mentioned as such. The things themselves are so indifferent to us, that they excite no kind of emotion, and of consequence, their colours produce no greater emotion, as the signs of such qualities, than the qualities themselves. The colours, in the same manner, which distinguish the ordinary dress of the common people, are never considered as beautiful. It is the colours only of the dress of the great, of the opulent, or of distinguished professions, which are ever considered in this light. The colours of common furniture, in the same way, are never beautiful: it is the colours only of fashionable, or magnificent furniture, which are ever considered as such.

It is observable, further, that even the most beautiful colours (or those which are expressive to us of the most pleasing associations), cease to appear beautiful whenever they are familiar, or when the objects which they distinguish have ceased to produce their usual emotions. The blush of the rose, the blue of a serene sky, the green of the spring, are beautiful only when they are new or unfamiliar. In a short time we observe them with the same indifference, that we do the most common and unnoticed colours. That, in the same manner, our perception of their beauty depends on the state of our own minds, and that it is only in seasons of sensibility that we are conscious of it, is a fact which every man knows so well from his own experience, that it would be needless to illustrate it.

It may be observed, also, that no new colour is ever beautiful, until we have acquired some pleasing association with it. This is peculiarly observable in the article of dress; and indeed it is the best instance of it; because, in such cases, no other circumstance intervenes by which the experiment can be influenced. Every man must have observed, that, in the great variety of new colours which the caprice of fashion is perpetually introducing, no new colour appears at first as beautiful. We feel, on the contrary, a kind of disappointment, when we see such a colour in the dress of those who regulate the fashions, instead of that which used to distinguish them; and even although the colour should be such as, in other subjects, we consider as beautiful, our disappointment still overbalances the pleasure it might give. A *few weeks*, even a few days alter our opinion. As soon as it is *generally* adopted by those who lead the public taste, and has become

of consequence the mark of rank and elegance, it immediately becomes beautiful. This, it is observable, is not peculiar to colours that in themselves may be agreeable; for it often happens, that the caprice of fashion leads us to admire colours that are disagreeable, and that not only in themselves, but also from the associations with which they are connected. A plain man would scarcely believe, that the colours of a glass bottle, of a dead leaf, of clay, &c., could ever be beautiful; yet within these few years, not only these, but some much more unpleasant colours that might be mentioned, have been fashionable, and admired. As soon, however, as the fashion changes, as soon as they whose rank or accomplishments give this fictitious value to the colours they wear think proper to desert them, so soon the beauty of the colour is at an end. A new colour succeeds; a new disappointment attends its first appearance; its beauty is gradually acknowledged; and the colour which was formerly the favourite, sinks into neglect and contempt. If the faculty by which the beauty of colours is perceived, had any analogy to a sense, it is obvious that such variations in our opinion of their beauty could not take place.

3. When the particular associations we have with such colours are destroyed, their beauty is destroyed at the same time.

The different machines, instruments, &c., which minister to the convenience of life, have in general, from the materials of which they are composed, or from the uses to which they are applied, a fixed and determinate colour. This colour becomes accordingly in some degree beautiful, from its being the sign of such qualities; and although this effect is in a great measure lost from the frequency of observation, it is still observable upon many occasions. Change the accustomed colour of such objects, and every man feels a kind of disappointment. This is so strong, that even if a colour more generally beautiful is substituted, yet still our dissatisfaction is the same; and the new colour, instead of being beautiful, becomes the reverse. Rose-colour, for instance, is a more beautiful colour than that of mahogany; yet if any man were to paint his doors and windows with rose-colour, he would certainly not add to their beauty. The colour of a polished steel grate is agreeable, but is not in itself very beautiful. Suppose it painted green, or violet, or crimson, all of them colours much more beautiful; and the beauty of it is altogether destroyed. The colours of cedar, of mahogany, of cedar-wood, of satin-wood, are not nearly so beautiful as many other colours that may be mentioned. There is no colour, however, with which such woods can be painted, that would be so beautiful as the colours of the woods themselves; because they are very valuable, and the colours are in some measure significant to us of this value. Instances of this kind are innumerable.

There are different *professions* in every country, which are distinguished by *different* coloured dresses. Whatever may have led to

this appropriation, and however fanciful and extravagant it may sometimes be, after it is established, there is felt a kind of propriety in the dress; and it is strongly associated in our minds with the qualities which such professions seem to indicate. We are in some measure disappointed, therefore, when we see a professional man not in the dress of his profession; and when he is in this dress, we conceive that there is a propriety and beauty in such a colour. Change the colours of these several dresses, and all this species of beauty is destroyed. We should not only laugh at the supposition of the army and navy being dressed in black, and the church and the bar in scarlet; but we should feel also a discontent, as if these colours had in themselves a separate expression, and were in these cases misapplied. Even in reversing the dress of individuals of these different professions, the whole beauty of their dress is destroyed; and we are conscious of a feeling of impropriety, as if the qualities which are peculiar to such professions were necessarily connected with the dress they wear. So strong is this association even in trifles, and so naturally do colours become expressive to us of the qualities with which we have found them generally connected.

In natural objects the same circumstance is very apparent. There are colours perhaps more generally beautiful than those which distinguish trees, or rocks, or waters, or cottages, or ruins, or any of the ordinary ingredients of rural scenery; yet no colours, but the natural, could possibly be beautiful, in the imitation of such scenes; because no other colours could be expressive to us of those qualities which are the sources of our emotion from such objects in nature. That all the beauty, in the same manner, of plants or animals, would be destroyed, if any new colours, however generally beautiful, were substituted in the place of those by which nature has distinguished their different classes, and which are of consequence associated in our minds with all the qualities which they possess, which is so obvious, that it is altogether unnecessary to attempt the illustration of it. That this principle applies also to the colours of dress, and that the same colour is beautiful or not, as the expression which it has is suited to the character or situation of the person who wears it, every person may satisfy himself by a little attention. As thus there is no colour whatever, which in all situations is beautiful, and as, on the contrary, the beauty of every colour is destroyed, whenever the associations we have with it are dissolved, it seems reasonable to conclude, that the beauty of such qualities arises from their expression, and not from any original fitness in them to produce this emotion.

4. If the beauty of colours arose from any original fitness in them to produce this emotion, it is apparent, that they who are incapable of *such perceptions*, must be incapable of such emotion. That the blind, *however, may* receive the same delight, from the ideas which they

associate with colours, that they do who see, is a fact which I think every one will be convinced of, who reads the poems of Dr. Blacklock. No man who is not acquainted with the history of their ingenious author, could perceive that he had the misfortune to lose his sight in early infancy. That from conversation, and from the perusal of books of poetry, it was possible for him to learn the distinguishing colours of certain objects, and to apply them with sufficient propriety in his own verses, I do not deny; but the circumstance of importance at present is this, that his poetry is full of the same sentiments, and expresses the same admiration with regard to the different visible qualities of matter, with that of poets who have had no such defect; and that the same power is ascribed to them in producing the emotions of beauty, and with as great accuracy with regard to particular instances, as in the compositions of those who have had the sense of sight in its fullest perfection. If our perception of the beauty of colours arose from some original fitness in such qualities to produce this emotion, it is obvious, that the blind must be as incapable of perceiving this beauty, as of perceiving the colours themselves; but if the beauty of colours arises from the associations we connect with them, this fact, in the case of Dr. Blacklock, admits of a very simple solution. From reading, and from conversation, he has acquired the same associations with the words that express such colours, as we have with the colours themselves; that the word white, for instance, signifies a quality in objects expressive of cheerfulness and innocence,—the word purple, the quality of majesty,—the word black, the quality of gloom and melancholy, &c. In this case, it is obvious, that he may feel the same emotions from the use of these words, that we do from the colours which they express; and that from the permanence of these associations in a great variety of cases, he may apply the terms with sufficient propriety, either in sublime or beautiful description. As this is in reality the case, it seems to be a very strong confirmation of the opinion, that the beauty of such qualities arises from the associations we connect with them, and not from any original or independent beauty in the colours themselves.

Chapter IV.—Of Forms.

Of all material qualities, that which is most generally, and most naturally productive of the emotions of sublimity and beauty, is form. Other qualities may be separated from most objects, without destroying their nature; but the form of every material object, in a great measure, constitutes its nature and essence, and cannot be destroyed, without destroying the individual subject to which it belongs. From whatever cause, *therefore*, the beauty of any material object proceeds

it is natural to ascribe it to the form, or to that quality which most intimately belongs to the object, and constitutes its essence to our senses. The common opinion, therefore, undoubtedly is, that forms in themselves are beautiful: that there is an original and essential beauty in some particular forms; and that this quality is as immediately discernable in them, as the forms themselves.

Philosophers, however, have not been satisfied with this common opinion. The supposition of such an original and independent beauty in forms, has been found inconsistent with many phenomena; and some more general principle was wanted, under which the different facts upon this subject might be tolerably arranged. Many theories accordingly have been formed to account for this species of beauty. Some have resolved it into a sense of proportion, and endeavoured to establish, by analogy from our other senses, certain proportions which are immediately and permanently beautiful. Others have accounted for this beauty from the union of uniformity and variety. Some have supposed it to arise from the consideration of utility. Others have asserted, that the beauty of forms arises from their commonness, and that the beautiful form is that which is most generally met with in objects of the same kind. Mr. Hogarth, in opposition to all, considers the beautiful form as being described by lines of a peculiar kind, and has produced a great variety of instances in support of his opinion.

It is not my design, at present, to enter into any examination of these several opinions. In all of them, I believe, there is something true to a certain extent, though I believe also, that they have arisen from a partial view of the subject, and are inadequate to account for the greater number of the phenomena.

I may be allowed, however, to observe, that of the two, the common opinion is by much the most defensible. To reduce the great variety of instances of beauty in forms to any single principle, seems at first sight altogether impossible; not only from this variety, but also, in innumerable cases, from the contrary nature of the forms, which, in fact, are beautiful. As no theory, besides, can possibly be maintained without some foundation in nature, the number of theories which have been produced upon this subject, are in themselves an evidence, that this beauty arises from more causes than any one of these theories comprehends.

The principle which I have endeavoured to illustrate, with regard to the beauty and sublimity of sounds and colours, will, perhaps, be found to be equally applicable to the beauty or the sublimity of forms; and, as far as I can judge, is free from the objections which may be stated both to the common and the philosophical opinions. In the observations which follow, I shall therefore endeavour to show, that *the sublimity or* beauty of forms arises altogether from the associations *we connect with* them, or the qualities of which they are expressive to

us; and I shall endeavour to explain, with as much accuracy as I am able, the different expressions of which forms are susceptible, and which are the foundation of that sublimity and beauty which we ascribe to them. The importance of the subject, will, I hope, be my excuse for the length, and perhaps for the tediousness of some of these illustrations.

Forms are naturally divisible into two kinds—into animated and inanimate forms. It is the latter of these only, which I propose at present to consider; as it is obviously necessary first to consider the source of the beauty of which form itself is capable, before we can properly ascertain that superior beauty which arises from animation.

With regard to inanimate forms, the principal expressions which they have to us, seem to me to be, first, the expressions of such qualities as arise from the nature of the bodies distinguished by such forms; and, secondly, the expressions of such qualities as arise from their being the subject or production of art. The first of these constitutes what may be called their natural beauty; the second, what may be called their relative beauty. There is also another source of expression in such qualities from accidental association, and which perhaps may be termed their accidental beauty.

Upon each of these sources of the beauty of forms, I shall offer some observations.

Sec. I.—Of the Natural Sublimity and Beauty of Forms.

Part I.—Of the Sublimity of Forms.—The sublimity of inanimate forms seems to arise chiefly from two sources; first, from the nature of the objects distinguished by that form; and, secondly, from the quantity or magnitude of the form itself. There are other circumstances in the nature of forms, which may extend or increase this character; but I apprehend, that the two now mentioned, are the only ones which of themselves constitute sublimity. Both of them, I believe, are productive of this effect, by being expressive to us of qualities capable of exciting very strong emotions.

I.—1. The forms which distinguish bodies that are connected in our minds with ideas of danger or power, are in general sublime. There is scarcely anything in inanimate nature more remarkably so, than all those forms which are appropriated to the instruments of war. The forms of cannon, mortars, &c., have all a character of this kind. Military ensigns, although approaching to very common and neglected forms, partake of the same character. There are few things more sublime than the forms of armour; particularly the steel armour which was in use in the middle ages. Even the familiarity of common use does *not altogether destroy* this effect: the sword, the spear, the

javelin, the dagger, are still sublime forms, and enter with propriety into the sublimest descriptions either of poetry or painting.

2. The forms that in general distinguish bodies of great duration, and which of consequence express to us great power or strength, are in most cases sublime. In the vegetable kingdom, the forms of trees are sublime, principally in proportion to their expression of this quality. Nothing is more sublime than the forms of rocks, which seem to be coëval with creation, and which all the convulsions of nature have not been able to destroy. The sublimest of all the mechanical arts is architecture, principally from the durableness of its productions; and these productions are in themselves sublime, in proportion to their antiquity, or the extent of their duration. The Gothic castle is still more sublime than all; because, besides the desolation of time, it seems also to have withstood the assaults of war.

3. The forms which distinguish bodies that are connected in our minds with ideas of splendour or magnificence, are in general sublime. The forms of the throne, the sceptre, and the diadem, approach, in fact, to very common and very neglected forms; yet they are all sublime, from being the signs of the splendour and magnificence of royalty. The triumphal car, and the triumphal arch, are sublime forms, from similar associations.

4. The forms, in the same manner, which distinguish bodies connected in our minds with ideas of awe or solemnity, are in general sublime. The forms of temples, although very different as forms, have in all ages been accounted as sublime. Even the most common forms employed in religious service, derive a character of this kind from the qualities with which they are connected. The thunderbolt of Jupiter, the trident of Neptune, &c., seem to have been considered by the ancients as sublime forms, although in themselves they are insignificant. The forms of all those things, in the same manner, which are employed in the burial of the dead, are strikingly sublime. The pall, the hearse, the robes of mourners, &c., even the plumes, which in general are so beautiful, and the colour of which is in most cases so cheerful, are, in this situation, above all other things, powerfully sublime.

That these, and probably other associations of a similar kind, have an effect in bestowing sublimity upon the forms which generally distinguish such bodies, every person, I think, will be satisfied, both from his own experience, and from conversation. That the sublimity of such forms arises from the qualities which they express, and not from an original fitness in any peculiar form to produce this emotion, is so apparent from the single consideration of the great variety of forms that are sublime, that I will not fatigue the reader by any further illustration of it.

II.—*The sublimity* of forms, in many cases also, arises from their

magnitude; and this quality alone is often sufficient to bestow sublimity. With magnitude, accordingly, we have many distinct and powerful associations.

In animal forms, magnitude is strongly associated in our minds with the idea of proportionable power or strength, and is chiefly sublime from its expression of this quality. Animals of great size, but feeble or harmless, are so far from being sublime, that they are in general contemptible; a fact which may easily be observed even in the opinions of children.

In inanimate forms, magnitude seems to have different expressions to us, according to its different appearance or description.

Magnitude in height, is expressive to us of elevation, and magnanimity. The source of this association is so obvious, and the association itself so natural, that such qualities of mind have, in all ages, been expressed by these images, and such magnitudes described by terms drawn from these qualities of mind.

Magnitude in depth is expressive to us of danger or terror, and, from our constant experience, of images of horror. In all countries the popular hell is considered as an unfathomable abyss, into which the souls of the wicked are plunged.

Magnitude in length, is expressive to us of vastness, and, when apparently unbounded, of infinity; that being naturally imagined to be without end, to which we can discern none. It is impossible to see a vast plain, and above all, the ocean without this impression. In spite of the knowledge we have of the immense space between us and the fixed stars, and of the comparatively trifling distance between any two points in this globe, yet the former is not nearly so sublime as the view of the ocean without shore, or even of a plain without bounds.

Magnitude in breadth, is expressive to us of stability, of duration, of superiority to destruction. Towers, forts, castles, &c., are sublime in consequence of this association, though very often they have no other considerable magnitude. The pyramids of Egypt are strikingly sublime in point of form, from this expression, as well as from the real knowledge we have of their duration. We are so accustomed to judge of the stability of everything by the proportion of its base, that terms borrowed from this material quality, are in every language appropriated to the expression of some of the sublimest conceptions we can form; to the stability of nations, of empires, of the laws of nature, of the future hopes of good men.

For the reality of these associations, I might appeal to every man's own experience, as well as to the common language of mankind. That it is from such expressions, or from being the sign of such qualities that magnitude is sublime, and not from any original fitness in the quality itself to produce this emotion, seems to be obvious from the *following considerations*: first, that there is no determinate magni-

tude, which is solely or peculiarly sublime, as would necessarily be the case, were magnitude itself the cause of this emotion; secondly, that the same visible magnitude which is sublime in one subject, is often very far from being sublime in another, and *vice versa;* and, thirdly, that magnitude, according to its different appearances, has different characters of sublimity, corresponding to the different expressions which such appearances have; whereas if it were in itself sublime, independently of all expression, it would in all cases have the same degree, and the same character of sublimity.

PART II.—OF THE NATURAL BEAUTY OF FORMS.—The most obvious definition of form is that of matter, bounded or circumscribed by lines. As no straight line, however, can include matter, it follows that the only lines which can constitute form, must be either, first, angular lines, or, secondly, curved or winding lines. Every form whatever must be composed either by one or other of these lines, or by the union of them.

When forms are composed by one of these lines solely, they may be termed simple forms. When they are composed by the union of them, they may be termed complex forms.

For the sake of perspicuity, I shall first consider what it is that constitutes the beauty of simple forms, and then, what constitutes the beauty of complex forms.

Simple forms, then, may be considered as described either by angular or winding lines. These different forms seem to me to be connected in our minds with very different associations, or to be expressive to us of very different qualities. I shall beg leave to mention some of these, without pretending to a complete enumeration.

1. The greater part of those bodies in nature, which possess hardness, strength, or durability, are distinguished by angular forms. The greater part of those bodies, on the contrary, which possess weakness, fragility, or delicacy, are distinguished by winding or curvilinear forms. In the mineral kingdom, all rocks, stones, and metals, the hardest and most durable bodies we know, assume universally angular forms. In the vegetable kingdom, all strong and durable plants are in general distinguished by similar forms. The feebler and more delicate race of vegetables, on the contrary, are mostly distinguished by winding forms. In the animal kingdom, in the same manner, strong and powerful animals are generally characterized by angular forms; feeble and delicate animals by forms of the contrary kind. In consequence of this very general connexion in nature, these different forms become expressive to us of the different qualities of strength and delicacy.

2. *In all those* bodies which have a progress, or which grow and *decay within* our own observation, the same character of form is ob-

servable. In the vegetable kingdom, the infancy or youth of plants is, in general, distinguished by winding forms. The infancy and youth of animals is, in the same manner, distinguished by winding or serpentine forms; their mature and perfect age, by forms more direct and angular. In consequence of this connexion, forms of the first kind become, in such cases, expressive to us of infancy, and tenderness, and delicacy; and those of the second kind, of maturity, and strength, and vigour.

3. Beside these very obvious associations, it is also to be observed, that from the sense of touch, angular forms are expressive to us of roughness, sharpness, harshness; winding forms, on the contrary, of softness, smoothness, delicacy, and fineness: and this connexion is so permanent, that we immediately infer the existence of these qualities, when the bodies are only perceived by the eye. There is a very strong analogy between such qualities as are perceived by the sense of touch, and certain qualities of mind; as in all languages such qualities are expressed by terms drawn from the perceptions of the external sense. Such forms, therefore, when presented to the eye, not only lead us to infer those material qualities which are perceived by the sense of touch, but, along with these, to infer also those qualities of mind which, from analogy, are signified by such qualities of matter, and to feel from them some degree of that emotion which these dispositions of mind themselves are fitted to produce. The epithets bold, harsh, gentle, delicate, are universally applied to forms. In all languages figurative expression of a similar kind will be found; and whoever attends either to his own feelings, or to the meaning which men in general annex to such words in applying them to forms, will, I believe, be convinced, that the emotion which they signify, and are intended to signify, is founded upon the associated qualities, and very different from the mere agreeable or disagreeable sensation which the material qualities alone convey.

4. The observations which I have now made, relate principally to simple curves, or to forms in which a single curvature takes place; as the curve of the weeping willow, of the young shoots of trees, of the stem of the tulip, and the lily of the valley. There is another species of form, commonly distinguished by the name of the winding or serpentine form, in which different curves take place, or in which a continued line winds into several curvatures. With this form, I apprehend we have another, and a very important association, I mean that of ease. From what cause this association arises, I will not now stop to inquire; but I conceive every one must have observed, that wherever we find vegetables, or any other delicate or attenuated body assume such a form, we are impressed with the conviction of its being easy, agreeable to their nature, and free from force or constraint. On the *contrary, when such bodies*, in the line of their progress, assume

angular forms, we have a strong impression of the operation of force, of something that either prevents them from their natural direction, or that constrains them to assume an unnatural one. That winding forms are thus expressive to us of volition and ease, and angular forms of the operation of force or constraint, appears from a singular circumstance in language, viz., that, in general, all the former directions are expressed by verbs in the active voice; a river winds, a vine wreathes itself about the elm, a flower bends, &c.; while, on the other hand, all directions of the latter kind are expressed in general by the passive voice of verbs. I believe, also, I may appeal to the observation of the reader, whether from the winding of a river, of the ivy, or of the tendrils of the vine, he has not an impression of ease, of freedom, of something agreeable to the object: and whether, in the contrary forms in such cases, he has not an impression of uneasiness, from the conviction of force having been applied, or some obstacle having occurred, to constrain them to assume a direction unnatural to them. In general, therefore, I apprehend, that winding or sepentine forms are expressive to us of ease, and angular forms of force or constraint. Such seems to me the principal associations we have with the great division of simple forms; winding forms being expressive to us of fineness, delicacy, ease; and angular forms of strength, roughness, and in some cases of the operation of force or constraint.

All forms, as perceived by the eye, are constituted by lines; and their beauty is dependent upon the nature of these constituent parts. It is natural, therefore, to inquire, whether, from such associations, any general principles can be formed, which may direct the artist in the invention of beautiful forms, by determining the character and expression of lines.

Lines differ either in regard to their nature, or their direction.

1. Lines differ in regard to their nature, according to the different degrees of their consistence or strength. Strong and vigorous lines are expressive to us of strength and stability when perpendicular; and of some degree of harshness or roughness when horizontal, or in an oblique direction. Fine and faint lines are expressive to us of smoothness, fineness, delicacy. In any given number of straight lines, that is always most beautiful which is finest, or which, while it preserves its continuity, has the appearance of the smallest quantity of matter employed in the formation of it; hence, in every subject, either of art or nature, one of the principal causes of the beauty of delicate outline.

2. Lines differ in their direction in two ways. They are either even or uneven, that is, straight or irregular. Irregular lines differ again; they are either in angles or curves.

1. *Even lines* are expressive to us of softness and smoothness.

2. *Uneven lines* are either angular or winding.

Angular lines are expressive of harshness, roughness, &c.

Winding lines, of pliancy, delicacy, ease, &c.

The real and actual beauty of lines will be found to correspond to those associations; and those are in fact the most beautiful which have the most pleasing or affecting expression.

1. Strong and even lines express strength and smoothness. They have therefore a degree of beauty. Fine and even lines express delicacy and smoothness. They are accordingly more beautiful than the former.

2. Strong and angular lines express strength and harshness. They are therefore very seldom beautiful. Fine and angular lines express delicacy together with roughness. They are beautiful therefore only, when the expression of delicacy prevails over the other.

3. Strong and winding lines express strength and gentleness or delicacy.—Their effect is mutually destroyed, and they are accordingly indifferent, if not unpleasing. Fine and winding lines express delicacy and ease. They are accordingly peculiarly beautiful.

4. The least beautiful lines are strong and angular lines. The most beautiful, fine and winding lines.

Considering, therefore, lines in this abstracted view, and independent of the nature of the bodies which they distinguish, it seems very natural to conclude, that those forms will be the most beautiful which are described by the most beautiful lines; and that, of consequence, the serpentine or winding form must necessarily be the most beautiful. It was this view of the subject which seems to have influenced Mr. Hogarth, in the opinions which he published in his Analysis of Beauty. He saw clearly, and his art afforded him continual proofs of it, that the winding line was of all others the most beautiful. He conceived, therefore, that all forms must be beautiful in proportion to the predominance of this line in their composition; and his opinion falls in so much with the general observation of mankind, that it has been universally adopted.

If, however, the observations which I have made upon the different expressions of forms are just; if the winding or serpentine form is beautiful, not of itself, and originally, but in consequence of the associations we connect with it, it ought to follow, that whenever this association is destroyed, the form should be no longer beautiful; and that wherever the same associations are connected with the contrary form, that form should then be felt as beautiful.

That this is actually the case, I shall now endeavour to show from several very familar illustrations.

1. If such forms were in themselves beautiful, it is reasonable to think that this should be expressed in language, and that the circumstance of the form *should* be assigned as the cause of our emotion. If, *on the contrary, such* forms are beautiful from their being expressive

of particular qualities, it is equally reasonable to think, that, in common language, this expression should be assigned as the cause of the emotion. That the latter is the case, cannot, I think, well be disputed No man, when he is speaking of the beauty of any form, unless he has some theory in his mind, thinks of ascribing it to the peculiar nature of the form, or of describing its beauty to other people, as consisting in this form. The terms, on the contrary, which are generally used upon these occasions, are such as signify some quality of which the form is expressive; and the epithets by which the beauty of the form is marked, are such as are significant of these qualities. Among these qualities, those of gentleness, fineness, or delicacy, as far as I can judge, are the most remarkable, and the most generally expressed in common language. In describing the beautiful forms of ground, we speak of gentle declivities, and gentle swells. In describing the beautiful forms of water, we speak of a mild current, gentle falls, soft windings, a tranquil stream. In describing the beautiful forms of the vegetable kingdom, we use a similar language. The delicacy of flowers, of foliage, of the young shoots of trees and shrubs, are expressions everywhere to be heard, and which everywhere convey the belief of beauty in these forms. In the same manner, in those ornamental forms, which are the production of art, we employ the same language to express our opinion of their beauty. The delicacy of a wreath, of a festoon, of the drapery of a column, or of a vase, are terms universally employed, and employed to signify the reason of our admiration of their forms.

It may be observed also, that in comparing similar forms, and determining with regard to their beauty, we employ the same language; and that the reason we assign for our preference of one form to another, is, in general, from its superior expression of fineness or delicacy. In comparing two vases, or two wreaths, or two festoons, or any other ornamental forms, a person unacquainted with the theories of philosophers, when he is asked the reason of his preference, very readily answers, because it is more delicate; but never thinks of assigning any circumstance of the form itself, as the foundation of his admiration. The least attention to the common language of mankind on such subjects, will sufficiently show how much the expression of delicacy determines the beauty of all ornamental forms. In describing any beautiful form, in the same manner, to other people, we usually employ the same language, and this language is not only perfectly understood, but immediately also conveys to others the conception of the beauty of this form. If we were to describe the most beautiful vase in technical terms, and according to the distinguished characteristics of its form, no one but an artist would have any tolerable conception of its beauty; but if we were simply to describe it, as peculiarly delicate in all its parts, I believe it would leave with every one

the impression of the beauty of its form. If, however, there were any original and independent beauty in particular forms, the description of this form would be alone sufficient to convey the idea of its beauty; and the circumstance of its delicacy or fineness would be as little able to convey this idea, as that of its colour.

I shall only further observe upon this subject, that the language and opinions of children, and of common people, are inconsistent with the notion of any original or absolute beauty in any particular forms. Every form is beautiful to children that distinguishes objects which they love or take pleasure in; and so far are they, or the common people, from having any conception of the abstract beauty of any peculiar forms, that it is very seldom they distinguish between the form and the subject formed, or feel any other emotion from it, than as it is expressive to them of the qualities of the object distinguished by that form. If, on the contrary, there were any original and independent beauty in any peculiar form, the preference of this form would be early and decidedly marked, both in the language of children, and the opinions of mankind.

As there appears, therefore, to be no form which is peculiarly or solely beautiful; and as, in winding or curvilinear forms, the general nature of language seems to ascribe this beauty to their expression of delicacy, and not to the mere circumstance of form itself, it appears probable, that the beauty of such forms arises from this expression, and not from any original fitness in such forms to excite this emotion.

2. When this association is destroyed, or when winding or curvilinear forms cease to be expressive of tenderness or delicacy, I believe it will be found, that they cease also to be felt as beautiful. The origin of our association of delicacy with such forms arises, as I have before observed, from our general experience that bodies of such a kind are distinguished by such forms. This association therefore will be destroyed, when such forms are given to, or assumed by bodies of a contrary kind.

The greater part of beautiful forms in nature, are to be found in the vegetable kingdom, in the forms of flowers, of foliage, of shrubs, and in those assumed by the young shoots of trees. It is from them, accordingly, that almost all those forms have been imitated, which have been employed by artists for the purposes of ornament and elegance: and whoever will take the trouble of reviewing these different ornamental forms, will find that they are almost invariably the forms of such vegetables, or of such parts of vegetables, as are distinguished by the delicacy and tenderness of their texture.

There are many parts, however, of the vegetable kingdom, which are not distinguished by this character of delicacy. The stem of some species of flowers, and of almost all shrubs, the trunk and branches

of trees, are distinguished by opposite characters, and would indeed be unfit for the purposes of vegetation if they were not. In these subjects, accordingly, the winding or serpentine form is very far from being beautiful, as it has no longer its usual expression of fineness or delicacy.

In the smaller and feebler tribe of flowers, for instance, as in the violet, the daisy, or the lily of the valley, the bending of the stem constitutes a very beautiful form, because we immediately perceive that it is the consequence of the weakness and delicacy of the flower. In the rose, on the contrary, and the white lily, and in the tribe of flowering shrubs, a class of vegetables of greater strength, the same form assumed by the stem is felt as a defect; and instead of impressing us with the idea of delicacy, leads us to believe the operation of some force to twist it into this direction. In the young and feeble branches of such plants, however, this form is again beautiful, when we perceive that it is the consequence of the delicacy of their texture, and of their being overpowered by the weight of the flower. In the vine or ivy, in the same manner, the winding of the young shoots and feebler branches, constitutes very beautiful forms. In the direction of the stem, on the other hand, such forms are felt as a defect, as no longer expressive of delicacy, but of force. In the growth of the stronger vegetables, as of trees, where we know and expect great strength, nothing can be so far from being beautiful, as any winding or serpentine form assumed by the trunk. The beautiful form of such objects is of so very different a kind, that it is in the opposite form only that we perceive it. In the direction of the branches, the same character is expected, and a similar defect would be felt in their assuming any regularly winding or curvilinear form. It is only when we arrive at the young shoots, and that only in their infant season, in spring, that we discover again the serpentine form to be beautiful, because it is then only that we perceive it to be really expressive of tenderness or delicacy. Observations of this kind are within every person's reach; and I believe it will be found, that, in the vegetable kingdom, the winding or serpentine form is no longer beautiful than while it is expressive of some degree of delicacy or fineness; and that it ceases to be beautiful, whenever it is assumed by bodies of a different kind.

All the different bodies which constitute the mineral kingdom, are distinguished by a greater degree of hardness and solidity, than is to be found in any other of the productions of nature. Such bodies, however, by different exertions of art, may be moulded into any form we please; but the beauty of the serpentine form, in such cases, is lost, from our consciousness of the absence of that delicacy which in general accompanies such forms. It is possible, for instance, *to imitate the* winding of the ivy, the tendrils of the vine, or the *beautiful curves* of the rose tree, in iron, or in any other metal. It

is possible also, to colour such imitations in so perfect a manner, as at first to deceive the spectator. If I am not mistaken, however, the moment we are undeceived, the moment we know that the subject is so different from that which characterizes such forms in real nature, the beauty of the forms is destroyed; and, instead of that pleasing sentiment of tenderness which the delicacy of the vegetables excites, a sentiment of disappointment and uneasiness succeeds: of disappointment, from the absence of that delicacy which we generally infer from the appearance of such forms; and of uneasiness, from the conviction of force having been applied to twist the subject into so unnatural directions. If the same observation is further pursued, I think it will be found, in general, that wherever the delicate forms of the vegetable world are imitated in metal, or any other hard and durable substance, the character of the form is lost; and that, instead of that lively emotion of beauty, which we receive from the original forms, we are conscious of a feeling of discontent, from the seeming impropriety of giving to such durable substances a character which does not belong to them.

There are, however, undoubtedly, cases in which curvilinear forms in such subjects are beautiful. I apprehend, however, that this takes place only when a kind of adventitious delicacy is given to such substances, and of consequence the same character is retained by the form which we have generally associated with it in real nature. This effect is in general produced by the following causes: first, when the quantity of matter is so small, as to overcome our sense of its strength or durability; and, secondly, when the workmanship is so excellent, as to produce an opinion of fineness or delicacy, independent of the nature of the subject upon which it is employed. In either of these cases, such forms may be beautiful, though assumed by the hardest or most durable substances.

A bar of iron, for instance, or of any other metal, may be twisted by force into the most perfect spiral form; but, in such a case, the conviction of force and labour destroys altogether the beauty of the general form. Suppose this bar lengthened, until it becomes as slender as the wires which are made use of in musical instruments, and as delicate as such wires are, and the forms become immediately beautiful. The same bar may be bent by force into the form of any given curve. In such a case the curve is not beautiful. Make the same experiment with a chain of iron, or of any other metal which in some respects is yielding and pliant, and where we know that no force is requisite to make it assume such forms, and the curves which it produces will be found very different in point of beauty. The imitation of any vegetable form, in the same manner, as the vine, or the rose, in any kind of metal, and as large as it is found in nature, would be very far from being *beautiful*. The imitation of such forms in miniature,

and in relief, when the character of the substance is in some measure forgot in the diminution of its quantity, may be, and very often is, extremely beautiful. The embellishments of a vase, or of an urn, which in general consist in the imitation of vegetable forms, are beautiful, both from the diminution of their size, and from the delicacy of their workmanship. If either of these circumstances were wanting, if they were massy in their substance, or imperfect in their execution, I apprehend a proportionable degree of their beauty would be lost. In the same manner, although none of the forms of the greater vegetables are beautiful, when imitated in their full size, many of the smaller and more delicate plants may be imitated with propriety, because such imitations suppose not only small quantities of matter, but great accuracy and perfection of art.

The same observation may be extended to the ornaments of architecture. These ornaments being executed in a very hard and durable substance, are in fact only beautiful when they appear but as minute parts of the whole. The great constituent parts of every building require direct and angular lines, because in such parts we require the expression of stability and strength. It is only in the minute and delicate parts of the work, that any kind of ornament is attempted with propriety; and whenever such ornaments exceed in size, in their quantity of matter, or in the prominence of their relief, that proportion which in point of likeness or delicacy we expect them to hold with respect to the whole of the building, the imitation of the most beautiful vegetable forms does not preserve them from the censure of clumsiness and deformity. A ballustrade might with equal propriety be finished in waving lines, but certainly would not be beautiful. A twisted column, though affording very pleasing curves to the eye, is acknowledged to be less beautiful than the common and regular one. In short, if the serpentine form were the only form of beauty, it might with sufficient propriety be introduced into a great number of the ornamental parts of architecture. The fact, of which every person may assure himself, that such forms are beautiful only in those parts where the quantity of matter is minute, the relief small and the workmanship more exquisite, affords a strong presumption, that such forms cease to be beautiful, when the general association we have with them is destroyed.

It is the same limit which seems to determine the beauty of those forms which are executed either in wood or plaster, for the ornament of our houses. Every person must have observed in old houses, the absolute deformity of those figures with which the roofs were decorated; and, in comparing them with those of modern times, will perceive that the great superiority of the latter consists in the great delicacy of *the forms*, as well as in the greater perfection of the execution. In *both, flowers* and foliage are imitated; but in the one in full relief, and

upon a scale sometimes greater than that of nature: in the other, with the simplest relief, and the finest lines, that are consistent with the preparation of the subject. The terms, accordingly, by which we express our contempt or our admiration of them, are those of heaviness or lightness; terms which in this subject are synonymous with massiness or delicacy. The subjects, however, are the same; and no other circumstances intervene, but the superior delicacy of the forms, and the greater accuracy of the workmanship.

It would lead me into too long a digression, if I were to enter into any detail on these subjects. The hints which I have offered, may perhaps lead the reader to satisfy himself by his own observation: that the winding or curvilinear form is beautiful only in those subjects which are distinguished by softness or delicacy of texture; that in substances of a hard and durable nature, it in general ceases to be beautiful; and that, in those cases where it is found to be beautiful, it arises from that adventitious delicacy (if I may so call it) which is produced, either when the quantity of matter employed is so small as to overcome our opinion of its strength or durability, or when the workmanship is so excellent, as to bestow on the subject a character of delicacy which does not properly belong to it. If in this manner it is found, that when the association is destroyed, the curvilinear form ceases to be beautiful, it is obvious, that this beauty is to be ascribed, not to the form itself, but to the quality which it expresses.

3. As the beauty of the winding or curvilinear form is thus destroyed, when those associations of tenderness and of delicacy, which we in general connect with it, are dissolved, so, in the same manner, it may be observed, that all other forms, when they have this character or expression, are considered and felt as beautiful. If there is any form, or species of forms, which is fitted by the constitution of our nature immediately to excite the emotion of beauty, and independent of all association, it is obvious, that there never could have been a doubt upon the subject; and that, in every class of objects, we should have been as able to point out the beautiful form, as to point out its colour or smell. The fact is, however, that in no class of objects is there any such permanent form of beauty; and, besides the disagreement of different ages and nations in the beauty of forms, every man must have perceived, in the course of his experience, that every general rule on this subject is liable to innumerable exceptions; and that there is no one form, or species of form, which, to the exclusion of all others, demands and obtains admiration.

The angular forms, accordingly, are also beautiful, when they are expressive of fineness, of tenderness, of delicacy, or such affecting qualities, may perhaps appear from the consideration of the following instances.

In the vegetable world, although it is generally true that winding

forms are those that are assumed by young, or feeble, or delicate plants, yet this rule is far from being uniform; and there are many instances of similar productions being distinguished by forms of an angular kind. There are accordingly many cases, where this form is considered as beautiful, because it is then expressive of the same qualities which are generally expressed by forms of the other kind. The myrtle, for instance, is generally reckoned a beautiful form; yet the growth of its stem is perpendicular, the junction of its branches form regular and similar angles, and their direction is in straight or angular lines. The known delicacy, however, and tenderness of the vegetable, at least in this climate, prevails over the general expression of the form, and gives it the same beauty which we generally find in forms of a contrary kind. How much more beautiful is the rose tree when its buds begin to blow, than afterwards, when its flowers are full and in their greatest perfection! yet in this first situation, its form has much less winding surface, and is much more composed of straight lines and of angles, than afterwards, when the weight of the flower weighs down the feeble branches, and describes the easiest and most varied curves. The circumstance of its youth, a circumstance in all cases so affecting; the delicacy of its blossom, so well expressed by the care which nature has taken in surrounding the opening bud with leaves, prevail so much upon our imagination, that we behold the form itself with more delight in this situation, than afterwards, when it assumes the more general form of delicacy. It is on a similar account that the leaves of vegetables form a very common, and a very beautiful decoration, though they are less distinguished by winding lines, than almost any other part of the plants. There are an infinite number of the feebler vegetables, and many of the common grasses, the forms of which are altogether distinguished by angles and straight lines, and where there is not a single curvature through the whole, yet all of which are beautiful, and of which also some are imitated in different ornamental forms with excellent effect, merely from the fineness and delicacy of their texture; which is so very striking, that they never fail, when we attend to them, to afford us that sentiment of interest and tenderness, which in general we receive from the opposite form. There are few things in the vegetable world more beautiful than the knotted and angular stem of the balsam; merely from its singular transparency; which it is impossible to look at, without a strong impression of the fineness and delicacy of the vegetable. Such observations with regard to flowers or plants, every person has it in his power to pursue. There is not, perhaps, any individual of this kingdom, which, if it is remarkable for its delicacy or tenderness, is not also considered as beautiful in its form, whether that form be winding or angular.

It deserves also to be remarked, that the form of the great *constituent parts of all* vegetables, whether strong or delicate, is nearly the

same; the growth of the stem and the direction of the branches being in both alike, and in both also either in straight or in angular lines. It is principally in the more delicate parts of the first, in the young shoots, and in the foliage, that they deviate from this form, and assume winding or curvilinear directions. It is in these parts only, as I have before observed, that we discover beautiful forms. In the class of feeble or delicate plants, on the contrary, the forms which we neglect in the first, are regarded as beautiful, because they have that expression which is found only in the opposite forms of the other. The same form has thus a different effect from the difference of its expression; and the straight lines and angular junctions, which are merely indifferent in the elm and the oak, are beheld with delight in the plant or the flower, when we are convinced that they are accompanied with tenderness and delicacy.

In many of those arts, where the beauty of form is chiefly consulted, the same circumstance is observable. In all of them, the beauty of form is principally determined by its expression of delicacy; but as, in many of them, the curvilinear form is necessarily less expressive of this quality than the angular one, it is accordingly less beautiful.

In the manufacture of glass, for instance, the great beauty of the form is in proportion to this expression. Nothing is less beautiful than thick and massy glass, which, from its quantity, seems intended to compensate for its fragility. Nothing, on the contrary, is more generally beautiful, than thin and transparent glass, which, from experience, we know to be the most decisive sign of its delicacy and weakness. In such a manufacture, winding lines cannot be observed without necessarily increasing the quantity and thickness of the material, and of consequence diminishing its fineness and transparency. Such forms, accordingly, are less beautiful than those composed of more direct and angular lines, which, while they admit of greater transparency, express also greater delicacy and fineness. To take a very common instance. The stalk of a wine glass might with equal ease be fashioned into serpentine or winding forms, as into the angular compartments in which we generally find it; yet I am much deceived if it would be nearly as beautiful, because these lines could not admit of that apparent fineness of surface, or transparency of matter, which is obtained by its angular divisions. In a lustre, in the same manner, one of the most beautiful productions of this manufacture, all is angular. The form of the prism, one of the most regular and angular of all forms, obtains everywhere; the festoons even are angular; and, instead of any winding or waving line, the whole surface is broken into a thousand little triangles: yet I conceive no person will deny its beauty. A lustre, on the other hand, composed of the most beautiful curves, and studiously varied into the most waving surface, would not be nearly so beautiful; because the necessary thickness which it would

give to the glass, would, in this case, be expressive of strength and of solidity, instead of delicacy; and would diminish altogether that fine transparency, which, in this manufacture, is immediately the sign of tenderness and fragility.

The same observation will apply to the manufacture of steel, or any other of the metals. The greatest expression of delicacy which a hard substance like steel can receive, is from the fineness and brilliancy of its surface. It demands, of consequence, angular forms, which, by admitting greater perfection of polish, or, at least, by displaying it better, are more beautiful than curves, which require both greater solidity and have less brilliancy. A sword hilt, or a watch chain, are infinitely finer and more beautiful, when they are composed of angular forms, than when they are composed of curves. In the forms which are given to jewels, the same rule universally obtains. The delicacy of such subjects is in their brilliancy. The only form therefore that is beautiful in them, is that which displays it.

There is no object of this kind, in which beauty of form is more generally consulted, or indeed more generally found, than in the different articles of household furniture. Such objects, by being composed of the uniform material of wood, and that a hard and durable one, admit of little difference in point of delicacy, but in the quantity, or in the form which is given to this material. With regard to the first, all furniture, I apprehend, is beautiful in proportion to the smallness of its quantity of matter, or the fineness or delicacy of the parts of it. Strong and massy furniture is everywhere vulgar and unpleasing; and though, in point of utility, we pardon it in general use, yet wherever we expect elegance or beauty, we naturally look for fineness and delicacy in it. The actual progress of taste in this article is from strength to delicacy. The first articles of furniture in every country are strong and substantial. As taste improves, and as it is found that beauty, as well as utility, may be consulted in such subjects, their strength and solidity are gradually diminished, until at last, by successive improvement, the progress terminates in that last degree of delicacy, and even of fragility, which is consistent either with the nature of the workmanship or the preservation of the subject.

In this progress it is discovered, that where the material which is employed is hard and durable, the greatest delicacy which can be given to the form, is rather in the use of direct and angular lines, than in winding and serpentine ones; and chiefly from the reason I have before mentioned, that curves cannot be employed without a proportionable and very obvious increase of solidity, and by these means destroying in a great measure the expression of delicacy. Whoever will look into any of those books, which have made us acquainted with the forms of Grecian or Roman furniture, in their periods of *cultivated taste,* will perceive, accordingly, that in scarcely any of

them is the winding or serpentine form observed; and that, on the contrary, the lightest and most beautiful of them, are almost universally distinguished by straight or angular lines, and by the utmost possible diminution of solidity, that is consistent either with convenience or use. What is there, for instance, more beautiful in this kind, than the form of the ancient tripod, im the best periods of Roman taste? The feet gradually lessening to the end, and converging as they approach it; the plane of the table placed, with little ornament, nearly at right angles to the feet; and the whole appearing to form an imperfect triangle, whose base is above. There is scarcely, in such a subject, a possibility of contriving a more angular form, yet there can be none more completely beautiful: because this form itself is more immediately expressive of delicacy, than almost any other which could have been imagined: the slightness of the whole fabric, the decreasing proportion of the feet as they descend to the ground, the convergence of the feet themselves, and the narrowness of the base for the superstructure, expressing not only the utmost degree of delicacy that is consistent with use, but impressing us also with the further conviction of the necessity of approaching or handling it with tenderness, for fear of destroying its slight stability. From this elegant model, accordingly, or from others, in which the same principle obtains, the greater part of the most beautiful articles of modern furniture are imitated. It is the form which prevails in the construction of chairs, tables, sofas, beds, &c.; and it is the delicacy which it so well expresses, that bestows upon them the greater part of their beauty. The application of winding or serpentine lines, or of the more general form of beauty, would tend only to diminish their effect, by bestowing upon them the appearance of a greater degree of solidity, and thus lessening, instead of increasing, the expression which is the cause of this effect.

In the course of these observations, the reader will observe, that I have all along gone upon the supposition, that there is in reality only one species of winding or curvilinear form; and that I have confined my observations upon their expression to this general character of form. Every one knows, however, that such forms admit of great variety, and that the number of different curvatures that may be produced are almost infinite. Whoever then will take the trouble of pursuing this investigation, may, I think, easily satisfy himself, that among these, there is none uniformly and permanently beautiful; that the same curve which is beautiful in one case, is very often not beautiful in others; and that in all cases that curvature is the most beautiful, which is most fully expressive of delicacy or ease in the subject which it distinguishes. As forms of this kind differ also in the number, as well as in the nature of their curvatures, he will perceive also, that *the same dependence* upon their expressions continues; that

the same number of curvatures or windings which are beautiful in one subject, are not beautiful in others; and that whenever in any subject the number of windings exceeds our opinion of ease or facility, it from that period becomes unpleasing, and expressive only of force or constraint. The limits which I must prescribe to myself in these observations, oblige me, in this, as in every other part of them, to refer much of the illustration which might be produced, to the reader's own reflection and investigation.

If the observations which I have now offered on the natural beauty of forms, or that beauty which arises from the consideration of form itself, be just, we may perhaps, without much impropriety, rest in the following conclusions on the subject.

1. That the beauty of such forms arises from the qualities of fineness, delicacy, or ease, of which they are expressive.

2. That in every subject, that form (whether angular or curvilinear) which is most expressive of these qualities, is the most beautiful form.

3. That, in general, the curvilinear or winding form, as most frequently expressive of these qualities, is the most beautiful.

With regard also to those arts which are employed in the imitation or invention of ornamental forms, the following observations may not be without their use.

1. That wherever natural forms are imitated, those will be the most beautiful, which are most expressive of delicacy and ease.

2. That wherever new or arbitrary forms are invented, that form will be the most beautiful which is composed by the most beautiful lines; or, in other words, by lines which have the most pleasing expression.

3. That wherever the subject of the form is of a hard or durable nature, that form will be the most beautiful, in which the smallest quantity of matter is employed, and the greatest delicacy of execution exerted.

The truth of these remarks I leave altogether to be determined by the observation of the reader. I shall only observe, that, in the prosecution of this inquiry, it is necessary to leave out of consideration every circumstance of design, of fitness, or of utility, and to consider forms in the light only of their appearance to the eye, without any relation either to an author or an end. These relations (as will be shown afterwards) are the foundation of a distinct species of beauty, to which the principles of their natural beauty do not apply.

Although, however, I have thus been led to conclusions different from those of Mr. Hogarth, yet it is but justice to a performance of uncommon ingenuity, to acknowledge, that the principle which he has endeavoured to establish in his analysis of beauty, is perhaps, of all others, the justest and best founded principle which has as yet been maintained, in the investigation of the natural beauty of forms. The instances which I have produced, and many others of the same kind

that will probably occur to every man of reflection, seem to me very strongly to show, that the principle of the absolute beauty of serpentine forms is to be considered only as a general principle, subject to many exceptions; and that not only this form is beautiful, from being the sign of particular interesting and affecting qualities, but that in fact, also, forms of the contrary kind are likewise beautiful, when they are expressive of the same qualities.

PART III.—OF THE COMPOSITION OF FORMS.—I.—The preceding observations relate altogether to simple forms, or to such forms as are described by a single line.

It is obvious, however, that there are few forms of such a kind. In the greater part of beautiful forms, whether in nature or in art, lines of different descriptions unite; and there is a beauty felt in certain combinations of these lines, or in the production of a complex form. The principles, therefore, which account for the beauty of simple forms, cannot be supposed to account also for that peculiar beauty which arises from the union of such forms in composition.

Simple forms are distinguished to the eye, by the uniformity or similarity of the line by which they are described. Complex forms are distinguished by the mixture of similarity and dissimilarity in these lines, or, in other words, by their uniformity and variety. The same principle which leads us to ascribe the beauty of simple forms to some original beauty in these forms themselves, leads us also to ascribe the beauty of complex forms to some original fitness in the composition of uniformity and variety, to produce this emotion.

That the composition of uniformity and variety in forms is agreeable, or is fitted by the constitution of our nature to excite an agreeable sensation in the sense of sight, I am not disposed to dispute. That these qualities are also capable of conveying to us very pleasing and very interesting expressions, and that in this manner they are felt as beautiful, I shall endeavour to show in the next chapter; but that the union of such material qualities as perceived by the eye, and without reference to any expression, is not in itself, and essentially beautiful, is obvious from the following considerations, of which I shall devolve the illustration upon the reader himself.

1. If the composition of uniformity and variety in forms, were in itself beautiful, it would necessarily follow, that in every case where this composition was found, the form would be beautiful. The greater part of forms, both in art and nature, are possessed of this union. The greater part of these forms, however, are not beautiful.

2. If it is said, that it is not the mere union of uniformity and variety, but a certain union of them, which is beautiful, then this peculiar union *must in all cases* be necessarily beautiful. The only difference

between forms in this respect must be either in the number or in the degree of their uniform, or of their varied parts. Let any particular or certain composition of these parts be fixed upon; it will be found, that so far is this union of uniformity and variety from being in itself beautiful, that it cannot be extended to objects of any different kind without altogether destroying their beauty,

3. It is further said, that it is not any certain, but a proper composition of uniformity and variety which is beautiful; then it is obvious, that this propriety is not the object of our external senses, and that whatever beauty arises from the composition of these qualities, is to be ascribed to some other principle than to the mere material qualities alone.

II.—If, on the other hand, the account which has been given of the natural beauty of forms, as expressive of certain affecting or interesting qualities, be just, it seems natural to suppose, that in the composition of forms, some propriety should arise from the composition of expression; that as lines are distinguished by different characters, the mixture of different lines should produce confusion, instead of beauty; and that the composition of form should then only be beautiful, when the same relation is preserved amid variety, which is demanded in all other cases of composition. (Essay I. chap. ii. sect. 3.)

That this is really the case, will, I trust, appear probable, from the following considerations.

1. I conceive it will be found, that the union of such qualities is felt as beautiful, only in those cases where the object itself has some determinate expression; and that in objects where no such general expression is found, no beauty is expected in their composition.

In the present case, uniformity and variety mean similarity and dissimilarity of form. Every one knows, however, that the mere union of similarity and dissimilarity does not constitute a beautiful form. In the forms of ground, of water, of vegetables, of ornaments, &c., it is difficult to find any instance of a perfectly simple form, or in which lines of different descriptions do not unite. It is obvious, however, that such objects are not beautiful in so great a proportion; and that, on the contrary, in all of them there are cases where this mixture is mere confusion, and in no respect considered as beautiful. If we inquire further, what is the circumstance which distinguishes beautiful objects of these kinds, it will be found, I believe, that it is some determinate character or expression which they have to us; and that when this expression is once perceived, we immediately look for, and expect some relation among the different parts to this general character.

It is almost impossible, for instance, to find any form of ground *which is not* complex, or in which different forms do not unite. Amid *a great extent of* landscape, however, there are few spots in which we

are sensible of any beauty in their original formation; and wherever such spots occur, they are always distinguished by some prominent character; the character of greatness, wildness, gaiety, tranquillity, or melancholy. As soon as this impression is made, as soon as we feel the expression of the scene, we immediately become sensible that the different forms which compose it are suited to this character; we perceive, and very often we imagine, a correspondence among these parts; and we say, accordingly, that there is a relation, an harmony among them, and that nature has been kind, in combining different circumstances with so much propriety, for the production of one effect. We amuse ourselves, also, in imagining improvements to the scene, either in throwing out some circumstances which do not correspond, or in introducing new ones, by which the general character may be more effectually supported. All this beauty of composition, however, would have been unheeded, if the scene itself had not some determinate character; and all that we intend, by these imaginary improvements, either in the preservation of greater uniformity, or in the introduction of greater variety, is to establish a more perfect relation among the different parts to this peculiar character.

In the laying out of grounds, in the same manner, every man knows, that the mere composition of similar and dissimilar forms does not constitute beauty; that some character is necessary, to which we may refer the relation of the different parts; and that where no such character can be created, the composition itself is only confusion. It is upon these principles, accordingly, that we uniformly judge of the beauty of such scenes. If there is no character discernible, no general expression, which may afford our imaginations the key of the scene, although we may be pleased with its neatness, or its cultivation, we feel no beauty whatever in its composition, and we leave it with no other impression than that of regret, that so much labour and expense should be thrown away upon so confused and ungrateful a subject. If, on the other hand, the scene is expressive, if the general form is such as to inspire some peculiar emotion, and the different circumstances such as to correspond to this effect, or to increase it, we immediately conclude, that the composition is good, and yield ourselves willingly to its influence. If, lastly, amidst such a scene, we find circumstances introduced, which have no relation to the general expression; if forms of gaiety and gloom, greatness and ornament, rudeness and tranquillity, &c., are mingled together without any attention to one determinate effect, we turn with indignation from the confusion, and conclude, that the composition is defective in its first principles. In all cases of this kind, we become sensible of the beauty of composition, only when the scene has some general character, to which the different forms in composition can refer; and determine its beauty by the effect *of this union in* maintaining or promoting this general

expression. The same observation may be extended to the forms of wood and water. But I willingly refer the reader to Mr. Whately's excellent 'Observations upon Modern Gardening,' for the full illustration of this remark, with regard to the different objects of natural scenery.

In the vegetable world, also, if the mere composition of uniformity and variety were sufficient to constitute beauty, it would almost be impossible to find any instance where vegetable forms should not be beautiful. That this is not the case, every one knows; and the least attention to the language of mankind will show, that wherever such forms are beautiful, they are felt as characteristic or expressive; and that the beauty of the composition is determined by the same principle which regulates our opinion with regard to the composition of the forms of ground. The beautiful forms which we ourselves remark in this kingdom; the forms which have been selected by sculptors for embellishment or ornament, by painters for the effect of landscape, by poets for description or allusion, are all such as have some determinate expression or association; their beauty is generally expressed by epithets significant of this character; and if we are asked the reason of our admiration, we immediately assign this expression as a reason satisfactory to ourselves for the beauty we discover in them. As soon, also, as we feel this expression in any vegetable form, we perceive or demand a relation among the different parts to this peculiar character. If this relation is maintained, we feel immediately that the composition of the form is good. We show it as a beautiful instance of the operation of nature; and we speak of it, as a form in which the utmost harmony and felicity of composition is displayed. If, on the contrary, the different parts do not seem adjusted to the general character; if, instead of an agreement among these parts, in the maintaining or promoting this expression, there appears only a mixture of similar and dissimilar parts, without any correspondence or alliance, we reject it as a confused and insignificant form, without meaning or beauty. If, in the same manner, the general form has no expression, we pass it by without attention, and with a conviction, that where there is no character to which the relation of the different parts may be referred, there can be no propriety or beauty in its composition.

In the different species of vegetables which possess expression, and which consequently admit of beauty in composition, it is observable also, that every individual does not possess this beauty; and it is the same principle which determines our opinion of the beauty of individuals, that determines our opinion of the beauty of different species. The oak, the myrtle, the weeping-willow, the vine, the ivy, the rose, &c., are beautiful classes of plants: but every oak and myrtle does not constitute a beautiful form. The many physical causes which affect *their growth,* affect also their expression; and it is only when they

possess in purity the peculiar character of the class, that the individuals are felt as beautiful. In the judgment accordingly that we form of this beauty, we are uniformly guided by the circumstance of their expression. When, in any of these instances, we find an accumulation of forms, different from what we generally meet with, we feel a kind of disappointment; and however much the composition may exhibit of mere uniform and varied parts, we pass it by with some degree of indignation. When the discordant parts are few, we lament that accident should have introduced a variety which is so prejudicial; and we amuse ourselves with fancying how beautiful the form would be, if these parts were omitted. It is only when we discover a general correspondence among the different parts to the whole of the character; and perceive the uniformity of this character maintained amid all their varieties, that we are fully satisfied with the beauty of the form. The superiority of the productions of sculpture and painting to their originals in nature, altogether consists in the power which the artists have to correct these accidental defects, in keeping out every circumstance which can interrupt the general expression of the subject or the form, and in presenting, pure and unmixed, the character which we have associated with the objects in real nature.

The same observation extends to every species of artificial form; but the pursuit of it would necessarily lead to a very long, and, I believe, a very unnecessary discussion. With regard to this subject, I shall leave the reader to his own observation, and shall only beg of him to reflect, whether, if the composition of uniformity and variety were necessarily beautiful, every species almost of artificial form would not be found to be beautiful; whether, on the contrary, the beauty of composition is not perceived in those subjects only where the form itself has some character or expression, or where it affords him some distinct principle, to which the relation of the different parts may be referred; and whether he does not determine the beauty of the composition, by the effect of this union of different parts in exciting one definite emotion? It is perhaps unnecessary to remark, that, in pursuing such observations, it is proper to leave out every consideration of design or of utility, and that the fittest subjects for such experiments are ornamental forms, or those forms in which no other object is sought, than the mere production of beauty.

I shall content myself with observing, upon this subject, that whatever is the source of the beauty of complex forms, it is natural to suppose it should be expressed in language; and that, if uniformity and variety were beautiful in themselves, by the constitution of our nature, it is reasonable to think that, in describing beautiful forms, such qualities should be assigned as the foundation of their beauty. If I am not deceived, however, this is very far from being the case. In describing such objects, we never satisfy ourselves with distinguishing them

by such characters; and if any person were in such terms to describe any form to ourselves, we should be at as great a loss as ever, with regard to its beauty. I apprehend, on the contrary, that the natural and uniform method we take for this purpose, is, first to convey to our hearers the idea of its character or expression; and after having given them this general conception of it, we enter into the detail of its composition, and endeavour to explain to them, with how great propriety the different parts are accommodated, to preserve and to promote this characteristic expression; and if we succeed in this description, we never fail not only to be understood, but to convey also to those who hear us, a perfect belief of the excellence and beauty of the composition. If the mere mixture of uniformity and variety were beautiful, independent of any relation to expression, all this natural process could never take place, and, if it did, could never convey any opinion of beauty.

2. I believe it will be found, that different proportions of uniformity and variety, are required in forms of different characters; and that the principle from which we determine the beauty of such proportion, is from its correspondence to the nature of the peculiar emotion which the form itself is fitted to excite. Every one knows, that some emotions require a greater degree of uniformity, and others, a greater degree of variety in their objects; and perhaps, in general, all strong or powerful emotions, and all emotions which border upon pain, demand uniformity or sameness, and all weak emotions, and all emotions which belong to positive pleasure, demand variety or novelty, in the objects of them. Upon this constitution of our nature, the beauty of composition seems chiefly to depend: and the judgment we form of this beauty appears, in all cases, to be determined by the correspondence of the different parts of the composition in preserving or promoting the peculiar expression by which the object itself is distinguished.

In the forms of ground, for instance, there is very obviously no certain proportion of uniformity and variety, which is permanently beautiful. The same degree of uniformity which is pleasing in a scene of greatness or melancholy, would be disagreeable or dull in a scene of gaiety or splendour. The same degree of variety which would be beautiful in these, would be distressing in the others. By what rule, however, do we determine the different beauty of these proportions? Not surely by the composition itself, else one determinate composition would be permanently beautiful; but by the relation of this composition to the expression or character of the scene; by its according with the demand and expectation of our minds; and by its being suited to that particular state of interest or of fancy, which is produced by the emotion that the scene inspires. When this effect is accordingly produced, when the proportion either of uniformity or variety corresponds to the nature of this emotion, we conclude

that the composition is good. When this proportion is violated, when there is more uniformity of expression than we choose to dwell upon, or more variety than we can follow without distraction, we conclude that the composition is defective, and speak of it either as dull or confused. Whatever may be the number of distinct characters, which the forms of ground possess, there is an equal number of different proportions required in the composition of them; and so strong is this natural determination of the beauty of composition, that, after admiring the composition of one scene, we very often, in a few minutes afterwards, find equal beauty in a composition of a totally different kind, when it distinguishes a scene of an opposite character.

'The style of every part' (says Mr. Whately, in the conclusion of his 'Observations upon Ground') 'must be accommodated to the character of the whole; for every piece of ground is distinguished by certain properties; it is either tame or bold, gentle or rude, continued or broken; and if any variety inconsistent with these properties be obtruded, it has no other effect than to weaken one idea, without raising another. The insipidity of a flat is not taken away by a few scattered hillocks; a continuation of uneven ground can alone give the idea of inequality. A large, deep, abrupt break, among easy swells and falls, seems at best but a piece left unfinished, and which ought to have been softened; it is not more natural, because it is more rude. On the other hand, a small fine polished form, in the midst of rough misshapen ground, though more elegant than all about it, is generally no better than a patch; itself disgraced, and disfiguring the scene. A thousand instances might be added, to show, that the prevailing idea ought to pervade every part, so far at least, indispensably as to exclude whatever distracts it; and as much further as possible, to accommodate the character of the ground to that of the scene it belongs to.'

After observing that the same principle extends to the proportion, and to the number of the parts, he observes, 'That ground is seldom beautiful or natural without variety, or even without contrast; and the precautions which have been given, extend no further, than to prevent variety from degenerating into inconsistency, and contrast into contradiction. Within the extremes, nature supplies an inexhaustible fund; and variety, thus limited, so far from destroying, improves the general effect. Each distinguished part makes a separate impression; and, all bearing the same stamp, all concurring to the same end, every one is an additional support to the prevailing idea.—An accurate observer will see in every form several circumstances, by which it is distinguished from every other. If the scene be mild and quiet, he will place together those which do not differ widely, and he will gradually depart from the similitude. In ruder scenes, the succession *will be less regular*, and the transitions more sudden. The

character of the place must determine the degree of difference between contiguous forms.—An assemblage of the most elegant forms in the happiest situations, is to a degree indiscriminate, if they have not been selected and arranged with a design to produce certain expressions: an air of magnificence or of simplicity, of cheerfulness, tranquillity, or some other general character, ought to pervade the whole; and objects pleasing in themselves, if they contradict that character, should therefore be excluded; those which are only indifferent must sometimes make room for such as are more significant; many will often be introduced for no other merit than their expression; and some which are in general rather disagreeable, may occasionally be recommended by it. Barrenness itself may be an acceptable circumstance in a spot dedicated to solitude and melancholy.' As the great secret of gardening seems thus to consist in the accurate preservation of the character of every scene, whether original or created; so it is the same principle that determines the opinion of men with regard to its beauty: and whoever will read Mr. Whately's excellent book with attention, will perceive that all his rules with regard to the forms of ground, of water, of wood, of rocks, and of buildings, may be referred to this leading principle; and that they are nothing more than investigations of the character of these different forms, and directions how to apply them in scenes of different expression.

Our opinion of the beauty of vegetable forms seems directed by the same principle. Many of the classes of trees have distinct characters. There are therefore different compositions which are beautiful in their forms: and in all of them, that composition only is beautiful which corresponds to the nature of the expression they have, or of the emotion which they excite. The character, for instance, of the weeping-willow, is melancholy; of the birch and of the aspin, gaiety: the character of the horse-chesnut, is solemnity; of the oak, majesty; of the yew, sadness. In each of these cases, the general form or composition of the parts is altogether different; all of them, however, are beautiful; and were this proportion in point of composition changed, were the weeping-willow to assume an equal degree of variety with the oak, or the oak to show an equal degree of uniformity with the weeping-willow, we should undoubtedly feel it as a defect, and conclude that, in this change of form, the beauty of the character and of the composition was lost.

It is in this manner, accordingly, that we judge of the beauty of individuals, in these different classes. All these individuals are not beautiful; and wherever they appear as beautiful, it is when their form adheres perfectly to their character; when no greater degree either of uniformity or variety is assumed, than suits that peculiar emotion which their expression excites in our minds. An oak, which wreathes not into vigorous or fantastic branches; a yew, which grows into thin

and varied forms; a plane-tree, or a horse-chesnut, which assumes not a deep, and almost solid mass of foliage, &c., appear to us as imperfect and deformed productions. They seem to aim at an expression which they do not reach, and we speak of them as wanting the beauty, because they want the character of their class.

In the formation of beautiful groups, the same adherence to expression is necessary: and whatever may be the character of the group, the real limit to variety is correspondence in this expression. The permanent character of trees arises from their form or their colour. In so far as form is concerned, forms of different character are never found to unite, or to constitute a beautiful composition. A mixture, for instance, of the light and upright branches of the almond, with the falling branches of the willow, the heavy branches of the horse-chesnut, and the wild arms of the oak, would be absolute confusion, and would be intolerable in any scene where design or intention could be supposed. The mixture of trees, on the other hand, that correspond in their forms, and that unite in the production of one character, are found to constitute beautiful groups. We speak of them accordingly as beautiful from this cause. When we meet with them in natural scenery, we are pleased with the fortunate, though accidental connection, and we say, that they could not have been better united by the hand of art: when we meet with them in cultivated scenes, we praise the taste of the artist, and say, that the composition is pure and harmonious. 'Trees' (says Mr. Whately), 'which differ but in one of these circumstances, whether of shape, of green, or of growth, though they agree in every other, are sufficiently distinguished for the purpose of variety: if they differ in two or three, they become contrasts; if in all, they are opposite, and seldom group well together. Those, on the contrary, which are of one character, and are distinguished only as the characteristic mark is strongly or faintly impressed upon them, as a young beech and a birch, an acacia and a larch, all pendant though in different degrees, form a beautiful mass, in which unity is preserved without sameness.' How far the same principle extends to landscape-painting, they who are acquainted with the art will be at no loss to determine.

In all the different kinds of ornamental forms, in the same manner, instead of their being any one determinate proportion of uniformity and variety beautiful, there are, in fact, as many varieties of beautiful composition, as there are varieties of character; and the rule by which we judge of this beauty, in every particular case, is by the correspondence of the composition to the character which the form is intended to express. To give the same proportion of uniform or of varied parts to every species of ornamental form, to forms of splendour, of magnificence, of gaiety, of delicacy, or of melancholy, would be to sin against *the very first* principle of composition, and would im-

mediately be detected, even by those who never heard of the principles of composition. The beautiful form of the vase, for instance, is employed in many different kinds of ornament, and may either be magnificent, elegant, simple, gay, or melancholy. In all these cases, however, the composition is different. A greater proportion of uniformity distinguishes it when destined to the expression of simplicity, magnificence, or melancholy, and a greater proportion of variety, when destined to the expression of elegance or gaiety. We immediately perceive also that there is propriety and beauty in this difference of composition; and if we are asked, why it is so, we readily answer, because it accords with the peculiar character which the form is there intended to have. If, on the other hand, this proportion is inverted, if the vase upon a tomb has all the varieties of a goblet, or the latter all the uniformity of the funereal urn, we immediately perceive an impropriety and deformity, and as readily explain it, by saying that the composition is unfitted to the expression which the object is intended to have.

The orders of architecture have different characters from several causes, and chiefly, I believe, from the different quantities of matter in their entablatures. The Tuscan is distinguished by its severity; the Doric by its simplicity; the Ionic by its elegance; the Corinthian and composite by their lightness and gaiety. To these characters, their several ornaments are suited with consummate taste. Change these ornaments; give to the Tuscan the Corinthian capital, or to the Corinthian the Tuscan, and every person would feel not only a disappointment from this unexpected composition, but a sentiment also of impropriety, from the appropriation of a grave or sober ornament to a subject of splendour, and of a rich or gaudy ornament to a subject of severity. Even in the commonest of all forms, the forms of furniture, the same principle is obvious. Chairs, tables, mirrors, candlesticks, &c., may have very different characters; they may be either simple, elegant, rich, or magnificent. Whatever this character may be, we demand a correspondence in the composition. The same number of uniform parts, which is beautiful in any simple form, is insipid in an elegant, and mean in a rich or magnificent one. The same variety of parts which is beautiful in a form of splendour or magnificence, is confused in an elegant, and tawdry in a simple, form.

In these, and a thousand other cases of the same kind, it will be found, that no certain proportion of uniformity and variety is permanently felt as beautiful; that, on the contrary, wherever the form, either in itself, or from its situation, has any determinate expression, the beauty of composition arises from its correspondence to that expression; and that, wherever forms differ in character, a different composition is approved, and is said to be approved, upon this account. I shall only add to these hints upon the subject, that the

natural language of men is uniformly guided by this principle; and that, whenever they attempt to describe the excellence of any composition, it is not by explaining the peculiar proportions of uniformity and variety which may obtain in it, but by showing how well this proportion accords with the expression by which the object itself is distinguished.

If the illustrations which I have now offered are just, we shall have reason to conclude, that the mere composition of uniformity and variety is not beautiful in itself, or from the original constitution of our nature; that it is felt as beautiful only in those cases, where the form is distinguished by some character or expression; and that the beauty of the composition arises, in every case, from its correspondence to the nature of that emotion which this expression is fitted to excite.

These conclusions seem to lead to a very different rule for the composition of beautiful forms, from that which Mr. Hogarth has laid down in his analysis of beauty. 'The way' (says he) 'of composing pleasing forms, is to be accomplished by making choice of variety of lines, as to their shapes and dimensions; and then again by varying their situations with each other, by all the different ways that can be conceived; and at the same time (if a solid figure be the subject of the composition) the contents or space that is to be enclosed within those lines, must be duly considered, and varied too, as much as possible with propriety.' Although it is with much diffidence that I differ from Mr. Hogarth, yet I cannot help being of opinion (in so far at least as the natural beauty of forms is concerned), that this rule might be followed in a thousand cases, without the production of any degree of beauty; that if the distinguishing form is inexpressive or indifferent, all this variety would only create confusion; and that in its application to forms of different characters or expression, it would excite a sentiment of impropriety, instead of pleasure.

On the other hand, the view which I have now given of the subject, would seem to lead to the following rules for beautiful composition.

1. That wherever beautiful form is intended, some characteristic or expressive form should be selected, as the ground or subject of the composition. And,

2. That the variety (whether in the form, the number, or the proportion of the parts) should be adapted to the peculiar nature of this expression, or of that emotion which this expression is fitted to excite in the mind of the spectator.

3. Forms of this kind are either single or dependent. In single or in dependent forms, their character is at the pleasure of the artist; and that will be always most beautiful, in which the character is best preserved.

4. In dependent forms, on the contrary, or those which are designed for particular *scenes or situations*, their character must be determined

by that of the scene or situation; and that also will be the most beautiful form, in the composition of which, the alliance to the general character is most precise and delicate.

III. The same principle seems to extend to the composition of colours. The mere mixture of colours is not beautiful. In the different colours that are mingled upon a painter's pallet, or in a book of patterns, we say there is no beauty, because there is no relation. What then is the relation which is necessary to constitute beautiful composition! It is not their mere relation of colours; because colours of very different kinds are found to produce beautiful compositions. It is not any established relation between particular colours which is beautiful from our original constitution; because, in different subjects, different compositions are necessary. I humbly apprehend, that it is the relation of expression.

In natural scenery, for instance, the colours of the great ingredients ground, water, wood, rocks, and buildings, are very different, and are susceptible of great varieties. In every scene, however, which is expressive, we look for and demand an unity in the expression of these different colours. We often find fault, accordingly, with the colour of particular objects in such scenes, and say that they are too rich, too solemn, or too cheerful, for the rest of the scene. The vivid green, for instance, which is so pleasing in a cheerful landscape, would ill suit a scene of melancholy or desolation. The brown heath, which so singularly accords with scenes of gloom or barrenness, would be intolerable in a landscape of gaiety. The grey rock, which throws so venerable an air over grave or solemn scenes, would have but a feeble effect in scenes of horror. The blue and peaceful stream, which gives such loveliness to the solitary valley, would appear altogether misplaced amid scenes of rude and savage majesty. The white foam, and discoloured waters of the torrent, alone suit the wildness of their expression.

The great difference in the colours of trees, requires attention in their composition into groups. If the oak, the yew, the birch, the fir, the aspen, the willow, &c., were mixed together indiscriminately, every one would exclaim at the impropriety of the composition, and say that there was no relation, and no character preserved. Unite, however, only such trees as are distinguished by colours of a similar character, the composition will be beautiful, and the variety will only serve to enhance and strengthen the expression. If any other rule but their expression were followed, would the effect be the same?

Different compositions of colours also are necessary in the different appearances of trees, whether as a clump, a thicket, a grove, or a wood. The same degree of uniformity in colouring which is beautiful in a wood, is displeasing in a thicket or open grove; the same degree *of variety* which is beautiful in these, is unpleasing in the other. To

what principle shall these differences be referred, but to the difference of character; to the airiness and gaiety of the one, to the majesty and solemnity of the other?

The scenes of nature often derive their character even from the season of the day in which they are viewed, and the aspect which they regard. How much the beauty of the composition of colours in such scenes, arises from the composition of their expression, is beautifully illustrated in the following observations of Mr. Whately.

'Some species and situations of objects are in themselves adapted to receive or to make the impressions which characterise the principal parts of the day. Their splendour, their sobriety, and other peculiarities recommend or prohibit them upon different occasions; the same considerations direct the choice also of their appendages: and in consequence of a judicious assemblage and arrangement of such as are proper for the purpose, the spirit of the morning, the excess of noon, or the temperance of evening, may be improved or corrected by the application of the scene to the season.

'In the *morning*, the freshness of the air allays the force of the sunbeams, and their brightness is free from glare; the most splendid objects do not offend the eye, nor suggest the idea of heat in the extreme; but they correspond with the glitter of the dew which bespangles all the produce of the earth, and with the cheerfulness diffused over the whole face of creation. A variety of buildings may therefore be introduced to enliven the view; their colour may be the purest white without danger of excess, though they face the eastern sun; and those which are in other aspects should be so contrived, that their turrets, their pinnacles, or other points, may catch glances of the rays, and contribute to illuminate the scene. The trees, in general, ought to be of the lightest greens, and so situated as not to darken much of the landscape by the length of their shadows. Vivacity in the streams, and transparency in a lake, are more important at this than at any other hour of the day; and an open exposure is commonly the most delightful, both for the effect of particular objects, and the general character of the scene.

'At *noon*, every expedient should be used to correct the excess of the season: the shades are shortened, they must therefore be thick, but open plantations are generally preferable to a close covert: they afford a passage, or at least admittance to the air, which, tempered by the coolness of the place, soft to the touch, and refreshing at once to all the senses, renders the shade a delightful climate, not a mere refuge from heat. Groves, even at a distance, suggest the ideas which they realize upon the spot, and, by multiplying the appearances, improve the sensations of relief from the extremity of the weather. Grottos, caves, and cells, are on the same account agreeable circumstances in a sequestrated recess: and though the chill within be hardly ever

tolerable, the eye catches only an idea of coolness from the sight of them. Other buildings ought in general to be cast into shade, that the glare of reflection from them may be obscured. The large expanse of a lake is also too dazzling: but a broad river moving gently, and partially darkened with shadow, is very refreshing, more so perhaps than a little rill; for the vivacity of the latter rather disturbs the repose which generally prevails at midday: every breeze then is still; the reflection of an aspen leaf scarcely trembles on the water; the animals remit their search of food, and man ceases from his labour; the stream of heat seems to oppress all the faculties of the mind, and all the active powers of the body; and any very lively motion discomposes the languor in which we then delight to indulge.

'In the *evening*, all splendour fades: no buildings glare, no water dazzles; the calmness of a lake suits the quiet of the time; the light hovers there, and prolongs the duration of day. An open reach of a river has a similar, though a fainter effect; and a continued stream, all exposed, preserves the last rays of the sun along the whole length of its course, to beautify the landscape. But a brisk current is not so consistent as a lake with the tranquillity of evening, and other objects should in general conform to the temper of the time: buildings of a dusky hue are most agreeable to it. No contrast of light and shade can then be produced: but if the plantations, which by their situation are the first to be obscured, be of the darkest greens; if the buildings which have a western aspect be of a light colour; and if the management of the lawns and the water be adapted to the same purpose, a diversity of tints will be preserved long after the greater effects are faded.'

There are few subjects where the beauty or deformity of the composition of colours is more observable, or at least more commonly observed, than in the article of dress. The following hints may perhaps lead the reader to perceive, that this beauty is also dependent upon expression.

1. It may be observed, that no dress is beautiful, in which there is not some leading or predominant colour displayed, or in which, if I may use the expression, there is not some unity of colouring. A dress in which different colours were employed in equal quantities, in which one half of the body was distinguished by one colour, and the other by another, or in which each particular limb was differently coloured, would be ridiculous instead of being beautiful. It is in this way, accordingly, that mountebanks are dressed; and it never fails to produce the effect that is intended by it, to excite the mirth and the ridicule of the common people.

2. No dress is ever remarked as beautiful, in which the prevailing colour has not some pleasing or affecting expression. There are a *variety of colours* which are chosen for common apparel, which have

no character or expression in themselves, and which are chosen for no other reason, but because they are convenient for the peculiar occupations or amusements in which we are engaged. Such dress accordingly has no beauty. When we say, that it is a useful or a convenient colour, we give it all the approbation that it is entitled to. There are, on the contrary, a variety of colours which are expressive from peculiar associations, which are either gay or delicate, or rich, or grave, or melancholy. It is always such colours that are chosen for what is properly called dress, or for that species of apparel, in which something more than mere convenience is intended. When we speak of such dress, accordingly, we generally describe its beauty by its character, by its being delicate or rich, or gay or magnificent, or, in other words, by its being distinguished by some pleasing or affecting expression. We should feel an equal impropriety in any person's choosing the colour of his common apparel, because it was gay, or delicate, or splendid.

This difference of expression constitutes the only distinction that seems to subsist between the colours that are fit for common, and those that are fit for ornamental apparel. But besides this, there is another constituent of the beauty of the prevailing colour: its relation to the character or situation of the person who wears it. The same colour which would be beautiful in the dress of a prince, would be ridiculous in the dress of a peasant. We expect gay colours in the dress of youth, and sober and temperate colours in the dress of age. We feel a propriety in the cheerful colours of a marriage, and in the melancholy colouring of mourning. There is a propriety of relation also between the colours that distinguish the dress of certain situations, and these situations themselves; which we never see violated without some degree of pain. Besides all this, there is a relation of a still more delicate kind, between the colours of dress, and the character that distinguishes the countenance and form of the person who wears it; which, however little attended to, is one of the most important articles in the composition of dress, and which is never observed or violated without either increasing or diminishing the beauty of the person it distinguishes. As the general beauty of dress depends upon the predominant colour being distinguished by some pleasing or interesting expression; so the beauty of dress in any particular situation or character, depends upon this expression being suited to that particular character or situation.

3. No dress is ever considered as beautiful in which the composition of the inferior colours is not adapted to the peculiar expression of the prevailing colour. The mere accumulation of different colours, without any regard to the general colour of the dress, every one knows to be proverbially expressive of ignorance and vulgarity. To suit these colours, on the other hand, to the prevailing colour, is considered as

the great criterion of taste in this kind of composition. If you inquire, accordingly, why, in any particular case, such colours are not suited to the dress, you will be told, that they are either too glaring, too solemn, too gay, or too delicate, for the predominant colour; in other words, that they do not accord with the expression of the dress, and that on this account the composition is not beautiful. Wherever, in this article, it is said, that colours either suit, or do not suit, what is meant or is felt, I believe is, that their expressions either agree or do not agree.

It is upon the same account, that different colours in dress, admit of very different degrees of variety, in the composition of the subordinate colours. Rich colours admit of little variety. Grave or melancholy colours of less. Delicate colours admit more of contrast than of variety. Gay or cheerful colours demand a great proportion of variety. In all these cases, the proportion which is beautiful is that which accords with the peculiar nature of the emotion that the predominant colour excites. Strong emotions, and emotions which border upon pain, require uniformity in their objects. Rich, or magnificent, or mournful dresses, require therefore a great proportion of uniformity in the composition of the colouring. Weak emotions require to be supported and enlivened. Dresses of a gentle or delicate character are therefore best illustrated by contrast. Emotions which belong to pleasure, demand variety in their objects. Dresses of a gay character, admit therefore of a greater proportion of variety in their colouring, than any of the others.

These slight hints (and the subject deserves no more) may perhaps lead the reader to conclude, that the beauty of dress (in so far as it relates to the composition of colours) depends upon the unity of expression; and that taste, in this respect, consists in the accurate perception of the expressions of colours, and of their relation both to each other, and to the character or situation of the person for whom they are destined.

There is one subject, in which some attention to those principles might perhaps be productive of no unimportant effect: I mean in dramatic representation. Every one has perceived the impropriety of the greater part of the dresses which are seen upon the stage. The confusion of rich and tawdry, gay and grave drapery, in the same performance; the neglect of every kind of correspondence between the dress and the character it distinguishes; comedy and tragedy clothed in the same colours; and, instead of any relation among the different dresses of the same performance, or any correspondence to the character of that performance, each particular dress at variance with another, and all of them left to be determined by the caprice or vanity of the actor! If, instead of this, we were to find in each *distinguishing* character, some agreement between the expression of the

dress and the nature of that character; if different ages, and professions, and situations, were attired with the same regard to propriety that we expect in real life; if the whole of the dresses in every particular performance had some relation to the character of that performance, and to the emotion it is destined to excite in our minds; if no greater degree of variety was admitted in this respect, than was consistent with this unity of expression; and if the whole were so imagined, as to compose a beautiful mass or group of colouring, in those scenes where any number of personages were assembled together; some addition, I conceive, would be given to the effect of an art, which has the capacity, at least, of becoming one of the most powerful means we know, both of strengthening virtue and of communicating knowledge.

Whether the principle which I have now explained, may not extend to what is called the harmony of colouring in historical painting; whether the beauty of the prevailing colour is not dependent upon the agreement of its expression, with that peculiar expression or character which distinguishes the scene; and whether the beauty of the composition of the subordinate colours is not determined by its effect in preserving this unity of expression, I shall leave to be determined by those who are more learned in the art, and better acquainted with instances by which the truth of the observation may be tried.

SEC. II.—OF THE RELATIVE BEAUTY OF FORMS.—Besides those qualities of which forms in themselves are expressive to us, and which constitute what I have called their natural beauty, there are other qualities of which they are the signs, from their being the subjects of art, or produced by wisdom or design, for some end. Whatever is the effect of art, naturally leads us to the consideration of that art which is its cause, and of that end or purpose for which it was produced. When we discover skill or wisdom in the one, or usefulness or propriety in the other, we are conscious of a very pleasing emotion; and the forms which we have found by experience to be associated with such qualities, become naturally and necessarily expressive of them, and affect us with the emotions which properly belong to the qualities they signify. There is, therefore, an additional source of beauty in forms, from the expression of such qualities; which, for the sake of perspicuity, I shall beg leave to call their relative beauty.

Every work of design may be considered in one or other of the following lights: either in relation to the art or design which produced it,—to the nature of its construction for the purpose or end intended,—or to the nature of the end which it is thus destined to serve; and its beauty accordingly depends, either upon the excellence or wisdom of this design, upon the fitness or propriety of this construction, or

upon the utility of this end. The considerations of design, of fitness, and of utility, therefore, may be considered as the three great sources of the relative beauty of forms. In many cases, this beauty arises from all these expressions together; but it may be useful to consider them separately, and to remark the peculiar influence of each, upon the beauty of forms.

PART I.—OF THE INFLUENCE OF DESIGN UPON THE BEAUTY OF FORMS.—I.—That the quality of design is, in many cases, productive of the emotion of beauty, seems to me too obvious to require any illustration. The beauty of design in a poem, in a painting, in a musical composition, or in a machine, are expressions which perpetually occur, both in books and in conversation, and which sufficiently indicate the cause or source of the emotion.

Wherever we discover fitness or utility, we infer the existence of design. In those forms, accordingly, which are distinguished by such qualities, the discovery of an end immediately suggests to us the belief of intention or design; and the same material qualities of form, which signify to us this fitness or usefulness, are the signs to us also of the design or thought which produced them.

It is obvious, however, that we often perceive the expression of design in forms, both in art and nature, in which we discover neither fitness nor utility. By what means then do we infer the existence of design in such cases; and are there any qualities of form, which are in themselves expressive to us of design and intention? I apprehend that there are; that there are certain qualities of form which are immediately and permanently expressive to us of these qualities of mind, and which derive their beauty from this expression.

1. In this view, it will easily be observed, that the material quality which is most naturally and most powerfully expressive to us of design, is uniformity or regularity. Wherever, in any form, we observe this quality, we immediately infer design. In every form, on the contrary, where we discover a total want of this quality, we are disposed to consider it as the production of chance, or of some power which has operated without thought or intention. 'In all cases' (says Dr. Reid) 'regularity expresses design and art; for nothing regular was ever the work of chance.' In what manner this connexion is formed, whether it is derived from experience, or to be considered as an original principle of our nature, I do not inquire. It is, however, very obvious in children, at a very early age; and it may be observed, that the popular superstitions of all nations are in a great measure founded upon it; and that all uniform or regular appearances in nature are referred by them to some intelligent mind.

The terms regularity and uniformity are used so synonymously, that it is difficult to explain their difference. As far as I am able to judge,

the following account of this difference may not be very distant from the truth.

With regard to both terms, when applied to forms, two things are observable. First, that they are only applied to such objects as compose a whole; and that they express a relation either between the parts of it considered separately, or among the parts considered as constituting the whole. The relations between different wholes, or the parts of different wholes, are expressed by other terms. Secondly, that they express always similarity or resemblance of parts. With regard to uniformity, the term itself is an evidence of it; uniformity being nothing but similarity of form. With regard to regularity, it is not less evident. A regular form, is a form where all the parts are similar: an irregular form, is a form where all the parts are dissimilar. A form partly regular and partly irregular, is a form where some parts are similar and others dissimilar. This is, I conceive, the literal meaning of regularity, as applied to forms, and what we always mean by it, when applied to natural objects. There is, however, another meaning of the term, when applied to works of art, viz., the imitation of a model. Thus, we say, that a pillar is regular, that a poem is regular, that any composition is regular, when they have the same proportions, and the same parts, which are found in the model, or prescribed by the rule. In this case, it is still the similarity of parts which constitutes regularity; the similarity between all the parts in the copy, and those in the original from which it is borrowed.

Considering then regularity and uniformity as both expressing similarity of parts in a whole, it is plain, that we may consider every form composed of parts, either in relation to the similarity of individual parts, or in relation to the similarity of the whole parts. In the first case, the resemblance of any two or more parts constitutes its uniformity. In the second, the resemblance or similarity of all the parts constitutes its regularity. Thus, we say that any two sides of a prism are uniform, but that the prism itself is a regular figure; that the sides of a cube are uniform, but the cube itself is regular; that the sides of many of the different crystals are uniform, but that the crystals themselves are regular solids.

In this view, both uniformity and regularity are constituted by similarity of parts; and the difference between them is, that uniformity expresses the similarity of parts considered separately, and regularity the similarity of parts as constituting the whole. There may therefore be uniformity without regularity, because there may be a similarity between any two or more parts of a form, without a general similarity among the whole; but there cannot be regularity without uniformity, or without this general resemblance of the whole parts to each other.

Whatever may be the truth of this explanation, it seems sufficiently

obvious, that both these qualities are naturally expressive to us of design; and that, from the appearance of the one, we are disposed to infer the exertion of the other.

I believe also it will be found, that the beauty of such qualities in forms, arises from this expression of design; and that they are not beautiful in themselves, independently of this expression.

1. Whenever we know that such appearances in nature are the effect of chance, or seem to have been produced without any design, they are not beautiful. Of this every one must have had many instances in his own experience. We often meet with vegetable productions, which assume perfectly regular forms, and which approach to a resemblance to animals. However exact such a resemblance may be or however regular the form, we never consider such productions as beautiful. We say only that they are curious: we run to see them as novelties, but we never speak of their beauty, or feel from them that emotion of delight which beauty excites. In many stones, in the same manner, we often find resemblances to vegetables, to animals, and to the human countenance. We never say, however, that such instances are beautiful, but that they are singular. The appearance of regularity or uniformity in rocks or mountains, or in any of the ingredients of natural scenery, is everywhere considered as a defect, instead of a beauty; and is beheld with no other emotion than that of surprise. If uniformity or regularity were beautiful in themselves, it is obvious, that such productions of chance would be equally beautiful with those that are produced by design.

2. It is obvious, that uniformity is not in every case equally beautiful, and that this beauty is in all cases proportioned to the difficulty of its attainment, or to the more forcible expression of design or skill. In simple forms, or such as are constituted by lines of one kind, uniformity is beautiful but in a very small degree. Increase the number of parts, and its beauty increases in proportion to their number. We are not much struck with the uniformity of two leaves of a tree. The uniformity of the whole number of leaves is a very beautiful consideration. The uniformity of these minute parts in every individual of the class, in every tree of the same kind in nature, is a consideration of still greater effect, and can scarcely be presented to the mind, without awakening a very powerful conviction of wisdom and design. It is upon this principle chiefly, I apprehend, that we determine the beauty of mathematical figures, when we consider them simply as figures, without relation either to their connexion with science, or with any of the productions of art. An equilateral triangle is more beautiful than a scalene or an isosceles, a square than a rhombus, an hexagon than a square, an ellipse than a parabola, a circle than an ellipse; because the number of their uniform parts are greater, and their expression of design more complete. In general,

in this subject, regular figures are more beautiful than irregular, and regular figures of a greater number of parts more beautiful than the same figures of a smaller number of parts: they cease only to be beautiful when the number of their parts is so great as to produce confusion, and of consequence to obscure the expression of design. It is the same principle which seems to produce the beauty of intricacy. Nothing is more delightful, than in any subject where we at first perceived only confusion, to find regularity gradually emerging, and to discover, amid the apparent chaos, some uniform principle which reconciles the whole. To reduce a number of apparently dissimilar particulars under one general law of resemblance, as it is one of the strongest evidences of the exertion of wisdom and design, so it is also productive of one of the strongest emotions of beauty, which design can excite.

II.—The view which I have now given of the beauty of regularity and uniformity, as arising from the expression of design, seems also very sufficiently to account for a fact, which every one that is conversant in the history of the fine arts must have observed; I mean the universal prevalence of uniformity in the earlier periods of these arts. And perhaps a general view of the progress of taste in this respect, is the best method by which I can explain the influence of design upon the beauty of forms.

1. In the infancy of society, when art was first cultivated, and the attention of men first directed to works of design, it is natural to imagine, that such forms would be employed in those arts which were intended to please, as were most strongly expressive of design or skill. This would take place from two causes; first, from their ignorance of those more interesting qualities which such productions might express, and which the gradual advancement of the arts alone could unfold; and, secondly, from the peculiar value which design or art itself, in such periods, possessed, and the consequent admiration which it raised. When any art was discovered among a rude people, the circumstance that would most strongly affect them, would be the art itself, and the design or skill which it exhibited: the real capacities or consequences of the art, they must altogether be ignorant of. What the artist would value himself upon, would be the production of a work of skill. What the spectator would admire, would be the invention or ingenuity of the workman who was capable of imagining and executing such a work. What the workman, therefore, would study, would be to give his work as full and complete an expression of this skill or design as he could, He would naturally, therefore, give it the appearance of perfect uniformity. In proportion as it had this appearance, it would more or less testify the exertion of this skill, and, of consequence, more or less excite the admiration of the spectator. The circumstance of art itself, would thus naturally prevail

over every other expression of form; and the value as well as the uncommonness of such talents would give to uniformity a degree of beauty, which it is perhaps difficult for those to imagine who are accustomed to the advancement of the arts in a polished age. How naturally all this would take place, may still, however, be seen in the tastes and opinions of children. What they perpetually admire is uniformity and regularity. The first little essays they make in art, are all distinguished by this character; the opinion they form of the value or beauty of any object that is shown to them, is from the prevalence of uniformity in its composition; and the triumph which they display, when they are able to produce any kind of regularity in their little productions, very sufficiently indicates the connexion that subsists in their minds, between such qualities and the expression of their design.

In the earlier periods of society, therefore, it seems reasonable to imagine, that all those arts which were directed only to ornament, or to the production of beauty, should employ, in preference to all others, the admired form; and that the artist should attempt to give to everything that constituted the fine arts of such an age, that uniformity, which was expressive of the quality most valued, and most admired among them. It is found, accordingly, that this is the fact; and that the form, which, in such periods, universally characterizes the productions of infant taste, is uniformity or regularity.

The first appearance of the arts of sculpture and painting, has, in every country, been distinguished by this character. The earliest attempts to imitate the human form, could have little merit as an imitation, and could be valued only for the skill and dexterity they appeared, at such a period, to exhibit. What the spectator admired, was not so much the resemblance to man, as the invention and art which produced this resemblance: what the artist therefore would study, would be to make his work as expressive of this skill as possible. He could, however, do this in no way so surely, as by the production of uniformity, by making choice of an attitude in which both sides of the body were perfectly similar, and every article of drapery, &c., upon the one side, having a correspondent article of the same kind upon the other. Such a work, carried with it immediately the conviction of design, and would of course excite the admiration of an age to which design was not familiar. The figures of the gods, and of the heroes of rude nations, are accordingly represented by every traveller, as fashioned in this manner; and whoever will take the trouble of reading the Abbé Winkleman's laborious History of Ancient Sculpture, will find that the earliest period even of Grecian art, was distinguished by the same character.

As the favourite form of such an age would be regularity, the first *step of the progress* of the art would naturally consist in the greater

perfection of this form, in the higher finishing of the parts, and in the increase of their number. It is at this period that the Egyptian sculpture seems to have stopped; the accuracy and the delicacy of its workmanship appear not to have been exceeded by any other people; but the possibility of adding variety to uniformity, or of copying the more graceful attitudes of the human form, seems either to have been unknown or unattempted among them. From what cause this peculiarity arose, it is now difficult to explain; if it may not be conceived to have been the effect of a law of religion, by which the artists were forbidden to give any other appearance or attitude to the objects of their worship, than those which were to be found in their ancient sculptures. Every history of painting sufficiently shows, that the first periods of this art have been uniformly distinguished by the same character.

The art of gardening seems to have been governed, and long governed by the same principle. When men first began to consider a garden as a subject capable of beauty, or of bestowing any distinction upon its possessor, it was natural that they should endeavour to render its form as different as possible from that of the country around it; and to mark to the spectator, as strongly as they could, both the design and the labour which they had bestowed upon it. Irregular forms, however convenient or agreeable, might still be the production of nature; but forms perfectly regular, and divisions completely uniform, immediately excited the belief of design, and, with this belief, all the admiration which follows the employment of skill, or even of expense. That this principle would naturally lead the first artists in gardening to the production of uniformity, may easily be conceived; as, even at present, when so different a system of gardening prevails, the common people universally follow the first system; and even the men of the best taste, in the cultivation of waste and neglected lands, still enclose them by uniform lines, and in regular divisions, as more immediately signifying, what they wish should be signified, their industry or spirit in their improvement.

As gardens, however, are both a costly and permanent subject, and are of consequence less liable to the influence of fashion, this taste would not easily be altered: and the principal improvements which they would receive, would consist rather in the greater employment of uniformity and expense, than in the introduction of any new design. The whole history of antiquity, accordingly, contains not, I believe, a single instance where this character was deviated from, in a spot considered solely as a garden; and, till within the last century, and in this country, it seems not anywhere to have been imagined, that a garden was capable of any other beauty, than what might arise from utility, and from the display of art and design. It deserves also further to be remarked, that the additional ornaments of gardening have, in

every country, partaken of the same character, and have been directed to the purpose of increasing the appearance and the beauty of art and of design. Hence Jet-d'Eaus, artificial fountains, regular cascades, trees in the form of animals, &c., have in all countries been the principal ornaments of gardening. The violation of the usual appearances of nature in such objects, strongly exhibited the employment of art. They accorded perfectly, therefore, with the character which the scene was intended to have; and they increased its beauty as they increased the effect of that quality upon which this beauty was founded, and intended to be founded.

The same principle which has thus influenced the taste of men in the earlier periods of society, with regard to sculpture and gardening, appears to have extended to every other art which was employed in the beauty of form. The art of dancing, one of the fine arts of a rude people, and which is capable indeed of being one of the fine arts of the most improved people, is distinguished in its first periods by the same character, and from the same cause. The common or general motions of the human body are acquired in so early infancy, and are performed with so little reflection, that they appear to be more the exertion of a natural power, than an acquisition of labour or art. When men then first began to take pleasure in the exertion of their agility, and to expect praise or admiration for their skill, it is obvious, that the motions and gestures which they would adopt, would be such as were furthest removed from the natural or easy motions of the body, and which from this difference were most strongly expressive of the address or agility of the dancer. Hence naturally arose the invention of all those uniform attitudes, in which the two sides of the body were rendered perfectly correspondent; those artificial gestures, in which the same motion of the limbs is repeated, without any change of place; and, as the art advanced, those regular figures in which the same form is perpetually described, and those more complicated dances in which a number of performers are engaged in repeating some intricate figure within a definite interval. Such gestures and figures, as essentially different from the usual gestures of the body, were immediately expressive both of design and of skill. The performer would study to excel in them. The spectator would admire him in proportion as he did excel; and hence the art would almost necessarily assume the same character of regularity or uniformity that distinguished the other arts which were destined to please.

It would be very easy to illustrate the same observation, from a variety of other particulars in the ornamental forms of rude nations, if it did not lead to a very minute, and I believe a very unnecessary investigation. The reader will perhaps however forgive me, if I avail myself of this opportunity to hazard a conjecture, whether the same *principle is not* the cause of the invention of rhyme and measure in

poetry? and whether it may not serve to account for a very remarkable fact that every one is acquainted with, viz., the precedence of poetical to prosaic composition.

The use of language is acquired so early in life, and is practised upon common occasions with so little study or thought, that it appears to a rude people, as it does to the common people of every country, rather as an inherent power of our nature, than as an acquisition of labour or study; and, upon such occasions, is considered as no more expressive of design or skill, than the notes of birds, or the cries of animals. When therefore men first began to think of composition, and to expect admiration from their skill in it, they would very naturally endeavour to make it as expressive as they could of this skill, by distinguishing it as much as possible from common language. There was no way so obvious for this, as by the production of some kind of regularity or uniformity; by the production either of regularity in the succession of these sounds, or of uniformity or resemblance in the sounds themselves. Such qualities in composition would immediately suggest the belief of skill and design, and would, of consequence, excite all that admiration which, in the commencement of every art, such qualities so strongly and so justly raise. The same cause, therefore, which induced the sculptor to give to his performances that form which was most strongly expressive of his skill, would induce the poet to employ that regularity or uniformity of sound, which was most immediately expressive also of his skill, and which was most likely to excite the admiration of his people. Rhyme or measure, then, (according to the nature of the language, and the superior difficulty of either) would naturally come to be the constituent mark of poetry, or of that species of composition which was destined to affect or to please. It would be the simplest resource which the poet could fall upon, to distinguish his productions from common language; and it would accordingly please, just in proportion to the perfection of its regularity, or to the degree in which it was expressive of his labour and skill. The greater and more important characteristics of the art, a rude people must necessarily be unacquainted with; and what would naturally constitute the distinction to them between poetry and common language, would be the appearance of uniformity or regularity in the one, and the want of them in the other.

As, thus, the first instances of composition would be distinguished by some species of uniformity, every kind of composition would gradually borrow, or come to be distinguished by, the same character. If it was necessary for the poet to study rhyme or measure, to distinguish his verses from common language, it would be equally necessary for the lawgiver to study the same in the composition of his laws, and the sage in the composition of his aphorisms. Without this character, they had *no distinction* from usual or familiar expression; they had

no mark by which they might be known to be the fruit of thought or reflection, instead of the immediate effusion of fancy. Before the invention of writing, the only expedient by which it seems possible that composition could be distinguished from common language, must have been some species of uniformity or regularity which might immediately convey the belief of art or design, and thus separate it from that vulgar language which appeared to imply neither. It is hence that, in every country, proverbs, or the ancient maxims of wisdom, are distinguished by alliteration, or measure, or some other artifice of a like nature; that in many countries the earliest laws have been written in verse; and, in general, that the artificial composition which is now appropriated to poetry alone, and distinguished by the name of poetical composition, was naturally the prevailing character of composition, and applied to every subject which was the fruit of labour or meditation; as the mark, and indeed the only mark that then could be given, of the employment of this labour and meditation.

The invention of writing occasioned a very great revolution in composition. What was written, was of itself expressive of design. Prose, therefore, when written, was equally expressive of design with verse or rhyme; and the restraints which these imposed, led men naturally to forsake that artificial composition, which now no longer had the value it bore, before this invention. The discovery of writing, seems therefore naturally to have led to composition in prose. It might be expected also, that the same cause should have freed poetry from the restraints with which the ignorance or the necessities of a rude age had thus shackled it; and that the great distinction of imagery, of enthusiasm, of being directed to the imagination, instead of the understanding, &c., should have been sufficient distinctions of it from prosaic composition, without preserving those rude inventions which were founded solely upon the expression of art. There are, however, two causes which serve to prevent this natural effect, and which it is probable will everywhere continue to appropriate rhyme or measure to poetical composition. First, the permanence of poetical models, and the irresistible prejudice we have in their favour, even from no other cause than their antiquity: and, secondly, the real difficulty of the art itself, which, in opposition to the general history of art, remains still as difficult, and perhaps more so, than in the first periods of its cultivation; and which of consequence renders it still as much the object of admiration, as when it first began to be cultivated. The generality of men judge of poetry by the perfection or imperfection of its rhymes; and the art or skill of the poet in the management of them, constitutes a very great share of the pleasure they have in the perusal of it.

Whatever truth there may be in this conjecture with regard to the *origin* of rhyme and measure, it is a fact sufficiently certain, that the *first periods* of the history of the fine arts, are distinguished by uni-

formity and regularity; and perhaps the observations which I have offered may lead the reader to believe, that this arises from the early, and perhaps instinctive association we have of such qualities in form, with design and skill, and the great and peculiar value they necessarily have in such a period of society.

2. When, however, the fine arts have made this progress, circumstances arise which alter in a great measure the taste of mankind, and introduce a different opinion with regard to the beauty of design. Two causes, more especially, conspire to this. First, the discovery that is gradually made, that other and more affecting qualities are capable of being expressed by forms, than that of mere design: and, secondly, the progress of the arts themselves, which naturally renders easy what at first was difficult, and, of consequence, renders the production of regularity or uniformity less forcibly the sign of skill than at first. Both tend immediately to the introduction of variety.

When the painter and sculptor, for instance, had advanced so far in their art, as to be able to imitate exactly the form of the human body, it could not well be long before they applied themselves to particular imitations of it. Some forms are beautiful, others not. They would study therefore to imitate the former; and perhaps endeavour to investigate what circumstances constituted the difference between such cases. The imitation of the beautiful, from the imitation of mere form, was itself a great step in the art, but was of still greater consequence in leading to another. Beautiful forms were more beautiful in one attitude than in another, under the influence of some passions or affections, than under the influence of others. To imitate such objects, therefore, it was necessary to study, not only the general beauty of form, but such attitudes and expressions, as were the signs of such passions or affections. The most beautiful forms in real life, were still in some respects deficient; and it was difficult to find instances, where such forms might display the most beautiful attitudes or expressions. The imagination of the painter or the sculptor, could alone supply this want. He would endeavour by degrees, therefore, to unite the beauty of form with the beauty of expression; and would thus gradually ascend to the conception of ideal beauty, and to the production of form and of attitude, more beautiful than any that were to be found in nature itself. In these various steps, the uniformity of the earlier ages would insensibly be deserted. Beautiful attitudes have little uniformity, and, in the expression of passion or affection, every variety of form must be introduced which takes place in real life. The artist, therefore, would not only be under the necessity of introducing variety, but the admiration of the spectator would necessarily keep pace with its introduction; both because the expression which his forms now assumed was of itself much more pleasing and interesting than the mere expression of design, and because this

variety was in fact now significant of greater skill and dexterity in the artist, than the mere uniformity of the former age. In those arts, therefore, variety of form would not only be considered as expressive of design; but as what distinguished the old and the modern school, was the uniformity of the one, and the variety of the other, it would be considered as the peculiar sign of elegant or of improved design.

In all the other arts, which were either directed to the production of beauty of form, or which were susceptible of it, the same causes would produce the same effect. In all of them, in proportion as the art was cultivated, the difficulty of it would decrease;—the same form which was beautiful, and solely beautiful, when the circumstance of art or skill only was considered, would every day become less beautiful as that skill became more common;—the natural rivalship of artists would lead them to deviate from this principle of uniformity, and, by the introduction of some degree of variety, to give greater proofs of their art and dexterity; it would not fail to be observed, that in such inventions some were more beautiful or more pleasing than others. Some further qualities, therefore, would be sought for in forms, than that which was merely expressive of design; the forms which were beautiful in nature, would be imitated in the productions of art; succeeding ages would gradually refine upon these beginnings of improvement; until, the most common forms would receive all that degree of beauty, which was consistent with their usefulness or ends.

The forms, however, that are beautiful in nature, are, in general, such as are distinguished by variety. In the imitation of them, variety would necessarily be introduced. The imitation of such forms, the application of them to common objects, was, in itself, more laborious, more difficult, and demanded more skill in the artist, than the production of mere uniformity. The variety, therefore, which took place in this period of the arts, would naturally become the sign of improved or of elegant design, as uniformity had formerly been the sign of design itself; and as the one distinguished the rude period of these arts, and the other the improved and elegant one, uniformity in this, as in the former case, would come to be considered as the sign of rude or imperfect design,—and variety, of that which was refined and cultivated. The application of these principles to the different arts, which are conversant in the beauty of form, is far beyond the limit of these observations.

By such means as these, by the imitation of nature, by the invention which rivalship would naturally excite, and by the natural progress of art itself, variety would be gradually introduced; in different degrees indeed in different arts, according to their nature, and the costliness and permanence of the subjects upon which they were employed, but still in all in some degree, and according to the measure in which they *admitted of it.* As it thus also became the principal visible distinction

between the rude and the improved state of these arts, it would become the sign of this improvement and refinement; the excellence of the artist would, in a great degree, be measured by the proportion of it which he was capable of giving to his works; and as the love of uniformity had distinguished the earlier periods of society, the love of variety would, from the same cause, distinguish the periods of cultivation and refinement. It is found, accordingly, that this is the great characteristic of the taste of polished ages: and so strong is this principle, that wherever, in the arts of any country, variety is found to predominate, it may be safely inferred, that they have long been cultivated in that country; as, on the other hand, wherever the love of uniformity prevails, it may with equal safety be inferred, that they are in that country but in the first stage of their improvement.

There is one art, however, in which the same effect seems to have arisen from very different causes. The variety which distinguishes the modern art of gardening in this island, beautiful as it undoubtedly is, appears not, however, to be equally natural to this art, as it has been shown to be to others. It is, at least, of a very late origin: it is to be found in no other country: and those nations of antiquity, who had carried the arts of taste to the greatest perfection which they have ever yet attained, while they had arrived at beauty in every other species of form, seem never to have imagined, that the principle of variety was applicable to gardening, or to have deviated in any respect from the regularity or uniformity of their ancestors.

Nor does it indeed seem to be either a very natural or a very obvious invention. A garden is a spot surrounding or contiguous to a house and cultivated for the convenience or pleasure of the family. When men began first to ornament such a spot, it was natural that they should do with it, as they did with the house to which it was subordinate, viz., by giving it every possible appearance of uniformity, to show that they had bestowed labour and expense upon the improvement of it. In the countries that were most proper for gardening, in those distinguished by a fine climate and a beautiful scenery, this labour and expense could in fact in no other way be expressed than by the production of such uniformity. To imitate the beauty of nature in the small scale of a garden, would have been ridiculous in a country where this beauty was to be found upon the great scale of nature: and for what purpose should they bestow labour or expense, for which every man expects credit, in erecting a scene, which, as it could be little superior to the general scenery around them, could of consequence but little communicate to the spectator the belief of this labour or this expense having been bestowed? The beauty of landscape, nature has sufficiently provided. The beauty, therefore, that was left for man to create, was the beauty of convenience or magnificence; both of them *dependent* upon the employment of art and expense,

and both of them best expressed by such forms, as immediately signified the employment of such means. In such a situation, therefore, it does not seem natural, that men should think of proceeding in this art beyond the first and earliest forms which it had acquired; or that any further improvement should be attempted in it, than merely in the extension of the scale of this design.

In this view, I cannot help thinking, that the modern taste in gardening, (or what Mr. Walpole very justly, and very emphatically calls the art of creating landscape), owes its origin to two circumstances, which may at first appear paradoxical, viz., to the accidental circumstance of our taste in natural beauty being founded upon foreign models; and to the difference or inferiority of the scenery of our own country, to that which we were accustomed peculiarly to admire.

The influence of these circumstances will be perhaps sufficiently obvious to those who recollect, that the compositions which serve most early, and indeed most universally, to fix our taste in this respect, are those which have been produced in Italy and Greece; in countries much superior to our own, in the articles of climate and of natural beauty; which are almost sacred in our imaginations, from the events by which they have been distinguished; and which, besides all this, have an additional charm to us, from the very compositions in which they are celebrated. The poems of Homer and Theocritus, of Virgil and Horace, have been now, for a considerable length of time, the first poetical compositions to which the youth of modern Europe are accustomed; and they have influenced accordingly, in a very sensible degree, the taste of all those who have been so early engaged in the study of them. Besides this, the effect of painting, and particularly of landscape-painting has been very great, both in awakening our taste to natural beauty, and in determining it. The great masters in this art have been principally Italians; men who were born amid scenes of distinguished beauty, who passed their lives in copying those features either of real or of adventitious expression with which Italy presented them, and whose works have disseminated, in every country where they found their way, the admiration of the scenes which they copied. From both these causes, and from the strong prejudice, which, since the revival of letters, we so early and so deeply feel, in favour of everything that relates to Grecian or to Roman antiquity, the imagery of Italian scenery had got strongly the possession of our imagination. Our first impressions of the beauty of nature had been gained from the compositions which delineated such scenery; and we were gradually accustomed to consider them as the standard of natural beauty.

With these impressions, it was very natural for the inhabitants of a country, of which the scenery, however beautiful in itself, was yet in many respects very different from that which they were accustomed to consider as solely or supremely beautiful, to attempt to imitate what

they did not possess; to import, as it were, the beauties which were not of their growth; and, in fact to create, according to Horace Walpole's vigorous expression, that scenery which nature and fortune had denied them.

Such improvements, however, as extremely expensive, could not be at first upon a very large scale. They could, for various reasons, occupy only that spot of ground which surrounded the house: and as they thus supplanted what had formerly been the garden, they came very naturally to be considered only as another species of gardening. A scene of so peculiar a kind, could not well unite with the country around. It would gradually therefore extend, so as to embrace all the ground that was within view, or in the possession of the improver. From the garden, therefore, it naturally extended to the park, which became therefore also the subject of this new, but very fortunate mode of improvement. And thus, from the nature of modern education, and the habit we are in of receiving our first rudiments of taste from foreign models, together with the admiration which so many causes have conspired to excite in our minds with regard to antiquity, seems very probably to have arisen that modern taste in gardening, which is so different from every other that men have followed, and which has tended so much to the ornament of this country.

It is to be observed also, in confirmation of what I have said, that the first attempts of this kind in England, were very far from being an imitation of the general scenery of nature. It was solely the imitation of Italian scenery; and it is not improbable, that they who first practised the art, were themselves ignorant of the possible beauties which it at length might acquire. Statues, temples, urns, ruins, colonnades, &c., were the first ornaments of all such scenes. Whatever distinguished the real scenes of nature in Italy, was here employed in artificial scenery, with the most thoughtless profusion; and the object of the art in general, was the creation not of natural, but of Italian landscape. The fine satire of Mr. Pope upon this subject, is a sufficient proof of the degree to which this fashion was carried; and it deserves to be remarked, to the honour of his taste, that he so soon saw the possible beauties of this infant art, and was so superior to the universal prejudices upon the subject.

It was but a short step, however, from this state of the art, to the pursuit of general beauty. The great step had already been made, in the destruction of the regular forms which constituted the former system of gardening, and in the imitation of nature; which, although foreign, and very different from the appearances or the character of nature in our own country, was yet still the imitation of nature. The profusion with which temples, ruins, statues, and all the other adventitious articles of Italian scenery was lavished, became soon ridiculous. The destruction *of these, it was found,* did not destroy the beauty of landscape.

The power of simple nature was felt and acknowledged; and the removal of the articles of acquired expression, led men only more strongly to attend to the natural expression of scenery, and to study the means by which it might be maintained or improved. The publication, also, at this time, of the Seasons of Thomson, in the opinion of a very competent judge (Dr. Warton) contributed in no small degree, both to influence and to direct the taste of men in this art. The peculiar merit of the work itself, the singular felicity of its descriptions, and, above all, the fine enthusiasm which it displays, and which it is so fitted to excite, with regard to the works of nature, were most singularly adapted to promote the growth of an infant art, which had for its object the production of natural beauty; and by diffusing everywhere both the admiration of nature, and the knowledge of its expression, prepared, in a peculiar degree, the minds of men in general, both to feel the effects, and to judge of the fidelity of those scenes in which it was imitated. By these means, and by the singular genius of some late masters, the art of gardening has gradually ascended from the pursuit of particular, to the pursuit of general beauty; to realize whatever the fancy of the painter has imagined, and to create a scenery, more pure, more harmonious, and more expressive, than any that is to be found in nature itself.

From the slight view which I have now given of the progress of those arts which respect the beauty of form, the reader may perhaps be satisfied, that this progress itself produces a difference in the sentiments of men, with regard to the beauty of design, and to those material qualities in forms, which are expressive of it; that the same degree of art or skill which is the object of admiration in an early age, ceases to be so in an age of greater improvement; and that hence as uniformity is the distinguishing form of beauty in the first periods of these arts, variety is so, from the same cause, in the latter.

These qualities, however, though in a great measure characteristic of the rude and the improved periods of the arts, are neither opposite nor irreconcileable. In every perfect form of beauty they must be united; and the same quality of design or skill which is the foundation of their beauty, affords also the law of their union.

Every work of art supposes unity of design, or some one end which the artist had in view in its structure or composition. In forms, however, considered simply as expressive of design, and without any other relation, the only possible sign of unity of design, is uniformity or regularity. It is this which alone distinguishes the productions of chance, from those of design: and without the appearance of this, variety is confessedly only confusion.

In every beautiful work of art, something more than mere design is demanded, viz., elegant or embellished design. The only material sign of this is variety. It is this which distinguishes, in general

beautiful from plain forms; and without this, in some degree, uniformity is only dulness and insipidity. Beautiful forms, therefore, must necessarily be composed both of uniformity and variety; and this union will be perfect, when the proportion of uniformity does not encroach upon the beauty of embellishment, and the proportion of variety does not encroach upon the beauty of unity.

Considering, therefore, forms in this light, as beautiful merely from their expression of design, the observation of Dr. Hutcheson may perhaps be considered as an axiom with regard to their beauty, viz., that where the uniformity is equal, the beauty of forms is in proportion to their variety; and when their variety is equal, their beauty is in proportion to their uniformity; that is, according to the view which I have now presented to the reader, when the unity of design is equal, the beauty of forms will be in proportion to their embellishment; and when the embellishment of forms is equal, their beauty will be in proportion to the unity of their design.

III.—In the view which I have now presented to the reader, the qualities of uniformity and variety are considered as beautiful from their expression of design. In the preceding section, on the other hand, these qualities are considered as beautiful from the effect of their composition, in maintaining and promoting the emotion which the subject itself is capable of exciting. That these qualities are in fact beautiful from both these causes; that their composition is in some cases beautiful from being expressive of the skill and taste of the artist; and in others, from being correspondent to the character or expression of the subject, are propositions so obvious, that I will not detain the reader by any illustration of them. The confounding of these distinct expressions, has also, I believe, been the cause of the greater part of mistakes which have been made in the investigation of the beauty of these qualities.

The beauty of these expressions, however, is very different; and as it is in the power of the artist, either to sacrifice the beauty of design to that of character or expression, or to sacrifice the beauty of character to that of design, there is not, perhaps, any circumstance of more importance to him, or to the arts of taste in general, than a proper comprehension of the difference of this beauty, and of the great superiority which the one has over the other. The superiority of the beauty of expression or character, seems to consist in three things. First, in the greater and more affecting emotion, which is produced by it, than what is produced by the mere expression of design: secondly, in this beauty being more universally felt, as being dependent only upon sensibility, while the beauty of design is felt only fully by those who are proficients in the art, and who are able accordingly to judge of the skill or taste which is displayed: and, thirdly, in the permanence of this beauty, *as arising from* certain invariable principles of our nature,

while the beauty of design is dependent upon the period of the art in which it is displayed, and ceases to be beautiful, when the art has made a further progress either in improvement or decline. In all those arts, therefore, that have for their object the production of beautiful forms, it may be considered as a first and fundamental principle, that the expression of design should be subject to the expression of character; and that, in every form, the proportion of uniformity and variety, which the artist should study, ought to be that which is accommodated to the nature of this character, and not to the expression of his own dexterity or skill. As in the mechanical arts, whose object is utility, and in which the ability of the artist is more surely displayed by the production of useful form, it would be absurd in him to sacrifice this utility to the display of his own dexterity or address; so in the arts of taste, whose object is beauty, and in which the taste or genius of the artist is in like manner most surely displayed by the production of beautiful form, it is equally absurd to sacrifice the superior beauty of character or expression, to that meaner and less permanent beauty, which may arise from the display of his own ability or art.

However obvious or important the principle which I have now stated may be, the fine arts have been unfortunately governed by a very different principle; and the undue preference which artists are naturally disposed to give to the display of design, has been one of the most powerful causes of that decline and degeneracy which has uniformly marked the history of the fine arts, after they have arrived at a certain period of perfection. To a common spectator, the great test of excellence in beautiful forms is character or expression, or, in other words, the appearance of some interesting or affecting quality in the form itself. To the artist, on the other hand, the great test of excellence is skill; the production of something new in point of design, or difficult in point of execution. It is by the expression of character, therefore, that the generality of men determine the beauty of forms. It is by the expression of design, that the artist determines it. When, therefore, the arts which are conversant in the beauty of form, have attained to that fortunate stage of their progress, when this expression of character is itself the great expression of design, the invention and taste of the artist take, almost necessarily, a different direction. When his excellence can no longer be distinguished by the production of merely beautiful or expressive form, he is naturally led to distinguish it by the production of what is uncommon or difficult; to signalize his works by the fertility of his invention, or the dexterity of his execution; and thus gradually to forget the end of his art, in his attention to display his superiority in the art itself. While the artist thus insensibly deviates from the true principles of composition, other causes unfortunately tend to mislead also the taste of the public. In the

mechanical arts, whose object is utility, this utility is itself the principle by which we determine the perfection of every production: utility, however, is a permanent principle, and necessarily renders our opinion of this perfection as permanent. In the fine arts, whose object is beauty, it is by its effect upon our imagination alone, that we determine the excellence of any production. There is no quality, however, which has a more powerful effect upon our imagination than novelty. The taste of the generality of mankind, therefore, very naturally falls in with the invention of the artist, and is gratified by that continued production of novelty which the art affords to it. In the mechanical arts, which are directed to general utility, all men are in some measure judges of the excellence of their productions, because they are in some measure judges of this utility. But in the fine arts, which seem to require peculiar talents, and which require at least talents that are not generally exerted, all men neither are, nor conceive themselves to be judges. They willingly, therefore, submit their opinions to the guidance of those, who, by their practice in these arts, appear very naturally the most competent to judge with regard to their beauty; and while the arts amuse them with perpetual novelty, very readily take for granted, that what is new is also beautiful. By these means; by the preference which artists are so naturally disposed to give to the expression of design, above the expression of character; by the nature of these arts themselves, which afford no permanent principle of judging; and by the disposition of men in general to submit their opinions to the opinions of those who have the strongest propensity and the greatest interest in their corruption, have the arts of taste, in every country, after a certain period of perfection, degenerated into the mere expressions of the skill and execution of the artist, and gradually sunk into a state of barbarity, almost as great as that from which they at first arose. 'Alit æmulatio ingenia,' (says Velleius Paterculus, in speaking of the same subject), 'et nunc invidia, nunc admiratio incitationem accendit; naturaque quod summo studio petitum est, adscendit in summum, difficilisque in perfecto mora est: naturaliterque quod procedere non potest, recedit; et ut primo, ad consequendos quos priores ducimus, accendimur, ita, ubi aut præteriri aut æquari eos posse desperavimus, studium cum spe senescit, et quod assequi non potest, sequi desinit; et velut occupatam relinquens materiam, quærit novam; præteritoque eo, in quo eminere non possumus, aliquid in quo nitamur conquirimus.'—*L.* 1. *ad fin.*

Nor is this melancholy progress peculiar to those arts which respect the beauty of form. The same causes extend to every other of those arts which are employed in the production of beauty; and they who are acquainted with the history of the fine arts of antiquity, will recollect, that the history of statuary, of painting, of music, of poetry, and *of prose composition*, have been alike distinguished, in their later

periods, by the same gradual desertion of the end of the art, for the display of the art itself; and by the same prevalence of the expression of design, over the expression of the composition in which it was employed. It has been seldom found in the history of any of these arts, that the artist, like the great master of painting in this country, (Sir Joshua Reynolds) has united philosophy with the practice of his art, and regulated his own sublime inventions, by the chaste principles of truth and science.

For an error, which so immediately arises from the nature, and from the practice of these arts themselves, it is difficult, perhaps impossible, to find a remedy. Whether (as I am willing to believe) there may not be circumstances in the modern state of Europe, which may serve to check, at least, this unfortunate progression; whether the beautiful models of antiquity in every art, may not serve to fix in some degree the standard of taste in these arts; whether the progress of philosophy and criticism may not tend to introduce greater stability, as well as greater delicacy of taste; and whether the general diffusion of science, by increasing in so great a proportion the number of judges, may not resoue these arts from the sole dominion of the artists, and thus establish more just and philosophical principles of decision, it is far beyond the limits of these essays to inquire. But I humbly conceive, that there is no rule of criticism more important in itself, or more fitted to preserve the taste of the individual, or of the public, than to consider every composition as faulty and defective, in which the expression of the art is more striking than the expression of the subject, or in which the beauty of design prevails over the beauty of character or expression.

PART II.—OF THE INFLUENCE OF FITNESS UPON THE BEAUTY OF FORMS.—I.—The second source of the relative beauty of forms is fitness, or the proper adaptation of means to an end.

That this quality in forms is productive of the emotion of beauty, every one must probably have perceived. In the forms of furniture, of machines, and of instruments in the different arts, the greater part of their beauty arises from this consideration; nor is there any form which does not become beautiful, where it is found to be perfectly adapted to its end. 'A ship which is well built, and which promises to sail well,' says Mr. Hogarth, 'is called by sailors a beauty.' In every other profession, in like manner, all machines or instruments are called beautiful by the artists, which are well adapted to the end of their arts. Even the most common and disregarded articles of convenience, are felt as beautiful, when we forget their familiarity, and consider them only in relation to the purposes they serve.

That fitness is not the only source of beauty in forms, is sufficiently *obvious.* But I apprehend the elegant and ingenious author of the

'Essay upon the Sublime and Beautiful,' has yielded too much to the love of system, when he will not allow it to be any source of beauty at all. The common experience and common language of mankind are at variance with this opinion; nor does it seem to be sufficiently supported by any of the instances he brings. 'On this principle (says he) the wedge-like snout of the swine, the little sunk eyes, and the whole make of the head, so well adapted to its offices of digging and rooting, would be extremely beautiful. The great bag hanging to the bill of the pelican, a thing likewise highly useful to this animal, would be likewise as beautiful in our eyes. The hedge-hog, so well secured against all assaults by his prickly hide, and the porcupine, with his missile quills, would be then considered as creatures of no small elegance. There are few animals whose parts are better contrived than those of the monkey. He has the hands of a man, joined to the springy limbs of a beast: he is admirably calculated for running, leaping, grappling, and climbing: and yet there are few animals which seem to have less beauty in the eyes of all mankind,' &c.—E. BURKE. (Ed. 1870.) In these instances, and in all the others he mentions, it is clear, that the animals are not, in general, considered as beautiful: but, if I am not deceived, the reason of this is, not that the fitness of their construction is not a consideration capable of producing the emotion of beauty, but that in general we never consider the animals in the light of this fitness of their construction. Such forms are not naturally beautiful, or have none of those ingredients which were before mentioned as constituting the natural beauty of forms. It is the natural beauty of forms, however, which first strikes us, because it demands neither any previous knowledge, nor any fixed attention. Such animals, besides, have many unpleasing qualities from their instincts, their characters, and their modes of life. It is in the light of these qualities, however, that we generally consider them; because painful or disagreeable qualities much more suddenly, as well as more powerfully affect us, than qualities of an opposite kind. Whenever, however, we can prevail upon ourselves to disregard these unpleasing considerations, and to consider the animals in the light of the fitness of their construction, I believe it is agreeable to every man's experience, that their forms become then, in some degree, objects of beauty. To say at first, that the head of the swine was a beautiful form, might perhaps expose the person who asserted it to ridicule; but if the admirable fitness of its construction, for the necessities of the animal, are explained, there is no person who will not feel, from this view of it, an emotion of beauty. There is nothing more common, accordingly, in books of anatomy, or natural history, than the term of beauty applied to many common, and many disagreeable parts of the animal frame: nor is there any reader, who considers the subject in the light of their fitness alone, who does *not* feel the same emotion with the writers. A

physician talks even of a beautiful theory of dropsies or fevers, a surgeon of a beautiful instrument for operations, an anatomist of a beautiful subject or preparation. The rest of the world, indeed, hear this language with some degree of astonishment. It is in the light only of horror or disgust that such objects appear to them; but to the artists these qualities have long disappeared, and the only light in which they regard them, is their fitness for the purposes of their arts. These instances are perhaps sufficient to show, that even the objects which are most destitute of natural beauty, become beautiful, when they are regarded only in the light of their fitness; and that the reason why they do not always appear beautiful to us, is, that we in general leave this quality out of our consideration. That pleasing or agreeable forms receive beauty from their fitness; and that the most perfect form of natural beauty may receive additional beauty from its being wisely adapted to some end, are facts too obvious to require any illustration. It is only to be observed, that this quality, in its effect of producing the emotion of beauty, is subject to the same limitations with every other quality of emotion. Such qualities, when either familiar or minute, fail in producing an emotion sufficiently strong to be the foundation of beauty; and as the emotion which we receive from fitness, is in itself greatly inferior to many other emotions of pleasure, there are perhaps more instances, where this quality is observed, without the sentiment of beauty, than in most other qualities of a similar kind with which we are acquainted. Unless when it is either great or new, the generality of men feel little beauty in any expression of fitness.

II.—Of the Beauty of Proportion.—I apprehend also, that the beauty of proportion in forms is to be ascribed to this cause; and that certain proportions affect us with the emotion of beauty, not from any original capacity in such qualities to excite this emotion, but from their being expressive to us of the fitness of the parts to the end designed. It is impossible for me, within the bounds which I prescribe myself, to enter fully into the investigation of the nature of proportion. All I intend is, to produce some of the considerations which induce me to join with Mr. Hogarth in this conclusion.

1. I conceive, that the emotion of pleasure which proportion affords, has no resemblance to any pleasure of sensation, but that it resembles that feeling of satisfaction which we have in other cases where means are properly adapted to their end. When a chair or a table, or any other common object is well proportioned, as far as I can judge, what we feel, is not a mere sensation of pleasure, from a certain arrangement of parts, but an agreeable emotion, from the perception of the proper disposition of these parts for the end designed. In the same manner, the effect of disproportion seems to me to bear no resemblance to that immediately painful sensation which we feel from any disagree-

able sound or smell, but to resemble that kind of dissatisfaction which we feel, when means are unfitted to their end. Thus, the disproportion in the legs of a chair or table, does not affect us with a simple sensation of pain, but with a very observable emotion of dissatisfaction or discontent, from the unsuitableness of this construction for the purposes which the objects are intended to serve. Of the truth of this, every man must judge from his own experience.

The habit, indeed, which we have, in a great many familiar cases, of immediately conceiving this fitness from the mere appearance of the form, leads us to imagine, as it is expressed in common language, that we determine proportion by the eye; and this quality of fitness is so immediately expressed to us by the material form, that we are sensible of little difference between such judgments and a mere determination of sense; yet every man must have observed, that in those cases when either the object is not familiar to us, or the construction intricate, our judgment is by no means so speedy; and that we never discover the proportion, until we previously discover the principle of the machine, or the means by which the end is produced.

2. The nature of language seems also very strongly to show the dependence of proportion upon fitness, and that it produces the emotion of beauty, by being considered as a sign of this quality. If a common person were asked, why the proportion of some particular building, or machine, or instrument pleased him, he would naturally answer, because it rendered the object fit or proper for its end. If we were describing a machine or instrument to any person who was unacquainted with the meaning of the term proportion, and wished to inform him of the beauty of this proportion, we could do it perfectly well by substituting the term fitness instead of it, and explaining to him the singular accuracy with which the several parts were adapted to the general end of the machine; and if we succeeded in this description, he would have the same emotion from the consideration of this fitness, that we ourselves have from the consideration of, what we call, its proportion. It very often happens, in the same manner, that we read or hear accounts of forms which we have never seen, and of consequence, of the proportions of which (if proportion is a real and original quality in objects) it is impossible for us to judge; yet I think, if we are convinced that the form is well contrived, and that its several parts are properly adjudged to their end, we immediately satisfy ourselves that it is well proportioned; and if we perfectly understand its nature or mechanism, we never hesitate to speak of its proportion, though we never have seen it. If proportion, on the contrary, consisted in certain determinate relations, discoverable only by a peculiar sense, all this could not possibly happen. The consideration of fitness could no more influence our opinion of proportion, than any other consideration; and we could as little collect the belief of proportion

in any form from the consideration of its fitness, as from that of its sound or colour.

In a great variety of cases, the terms fitness and proportion are perfectly synonymous. There is, however, a distinction between them, which it may be necessary to explain, as it will afford a more accurate conception of the nature of proportion, and foundation of its beauty.

Every form which is susceptible of proportion, may be considered in either one or other of the following lights. First, in the light of its whole or general relation to the end designed, or when it is considered as a whole, without any distinction of parts; or, secondly, in the light of the relation of its several parts to this end. Thus, in the case of a machine, we may sometimes consider it in the light of its general utility for the end it is destined to serve, and sometimes in the light of the propriety of the different parts, for the attainment of this end. When we consider it in the first light, it is its fitness which we properly consider. When we consider it in the second light, it is its proportion we consider. Fitness may therefore be supposed to express the general relation of propriety between means and an end, and proportion a peculiar or subordinate relation of this kind, viz., the proper relation of parts to an end. Both agree in expressing the relation of propriety between means and their ends. Fitness expresses the proper relation of the whole of the means to the end. Proportion is the proper relation of a part, or of parts, to their end.

In common language, accordingly, whenever we speak of this relation in a subject which has no division of parts, the terms are used synonymously. Thus we say, that a man's expenses are fitted, or are proportioned, to his income; that a man's ambition is fitted or proportioned to his talents; that an undertaking is fitted or proportioned to one's powers.

In subjects which are capable of division into parts, on the other hand, the terms fitness and proportion are not used synonymously, but according to the explanation which I have now given. Thus we say, that the form of the eye is admirably fitted for vision; that the telescope is fitted for discovering objects at a distance; that the steam-engine is fitted for raising water: but we could not say, in any of these cases, that they were proportioned to their ends. When we consider these subjects as composed of parts, and attend to the form of these parts for the attainment of their ends, we immediately speak of the proportion of these parts. The just proportion of such parts is, accordingly, nothing more than that peculiar form or dimension which has been found, from experience, best fitted for the accomplishment of the purpose of the instrument or the machine. Proportion therefore may, I apprehend, be considered as applicable only to forms composed of parts, and to express the relation of propriety between any part or parts, and the end they are destined to serve.

3. It may be further observed, that forms are just susceptible of as many proportions, as they are susceptible of parts necessary to the end for which they are intended: and that every part which has no immediate relation to this end, is unsusceptible of any accurate proportion. In many forms of the most common kind, there are a great number of parts which have no relation to the end or purpose of the form, and which are intended to serve the purpose of ornament rather than of use. In such parts, accordingly, we never expect or perceive any accurate proportion; nor is there any settled and permanent opinion of beauty in them, as there is in the great and necessary parts of the form. In the form of a chair, for instance, or table or sofa, or door or window, several of the parts are merely ornamental: they have no immediate relation to the fitness of the form: and they vary, accordingly, almost every year in their forms and sizes. All that is required of them is, that they should not obstruct the general fitness: within that limit they are susceptible of perpetual and pleasing variety. There are other parts, however, of the same forms, which are necessary to the general end or purpose of their construction; as the height of the chair for the convenience of sitting, of the table for its peculiar purposes, &c. These parts, accordingly, have all a proportion, which is immediately discerned, and which is never greatly violated without producing an emotion of dissatisfaction. If, on the contrary, proportion was something absolute and independent in forms, it seems difficult to imagine, that it should be found only in those forms which are susceptible of fitness, and in those parts only of such forms as admit of this quality.

4. Our sense of proportion in every form keeps pace with our knowledge of the fitness of its construction. Where we have no acquaintance with the fitness of any form, we have no sense of its peculiar proportions. No man, for instance ever presumes to speak of the proportions of a machine, of the use or purpose of which he is ignorant. When a new machine is shown us, we may pronounce with regard to the simplicity or the complexness of its construction, but we never venture to pronounce with regard to the propriety or impropriety of its proportions. When our acquaintance is greater with the uses or purposes of any particular class of forms than the generality of people, we are sensible of a greater number of pleasing proportions in such objects than the rest of the world; and the same parts which others look upon with indifference, we perceive as beautiful, from our knowledge of the propriety of their construction for the end designed. This every person must have observed in the language of artists, upon the subject of the instruments of their own arts; in the language of anatomists, and proficients in natural history, on many different subjects of their science; as well as in the increase of his own sense of proportion *in different forms*, with the increase of his knowledge of

the ends that such forms are destined to serve. When any improvement, in the same manner, is made in the construction of the forms of art, so that different proportions of parts are introduced, and produce their end better than the former, the new proportions gradually become beautiful, while the former lose their beauty. In general, it may be observed, that the certainty of proportion, is in all cases dependent upon the certainty of fitness. First, where this fitness is absolutely determined, as in many cases of mechanics, the proportion is equally determined. Secondly, where it is determined only by experience, the opinion of the beauty of proportion varies with the progress of such experience. Thirdly, where this fitness cannot be subjected to experience, as in the case of natural forms, the common proportion is generally conceived to be the fittest, and is therefore considered as the most beautiful. It is impossible, I apprehend, to reconcile these cases of the dependence of our sense of proportion upon our opinion of fitness, to the belief that there are any certain and established proportions in forms, which are originally and independently beautiful.

These illustrations seem to me very strongly to show the intimate connexion which subsists between proportion and fitness; and to afford a much more simple and satisfactory solution of the delight which proportion produces, than the opinion of its being a real and independent quality in objects.

There is, however, one case in which it may still be doubted, whether this explanation of the nature of proportion is sufficient to account for the phenomena: I mean in the case of architecture. The writers on this subject who have best understood the art, have been unanimous in considering the proportions which have been discovered in it, as deriving their effect from the original constitution of our nature, and as beautiful in themselves, without relation to any expression. They have been willing also, sometimes, to support their opinion by analogies drawn from proportions in other subjects, and have remarked several cases in which similar proportions are beautiful in music and in numbers. The futility of all reasoning from such analogies has been so often exposed, and is in itself, indeed, so very obvious, that I shall not stop to consider it.

I flatter myself, therefore, that it will not be considered as an unnecessary digression, if I endeavour to show, that the beauty of the proportions in this art, are resolvable into the same principle, and that they please us, not from any original law of our nature, but as expressive of fitness.

The proportions in architecture relate either to its external or its internal parts. I shall offer some observations upon these subjects

III.—Of the External Proportions of Architecture.—The

propriety or fitness of any building, intended for the habitation of man (as seen from without), consists chiefly in two things; first, in its stability; and, secondly, in its being sufficient for the support of the roof. Walls, in every country, at the same period of time, are nearly of an equal thickness. It is easy, therefore, for the spectator to judge, from their external appearance, whether they are or are not sufficient for these two purposes. In plain buildings, intended merely for use, and without any view to ornament, it is these considerations which chiefly determine our opinions of proportion. When the walls are of such a height as seems sufficient both for their own stability, and for the support of the weight which is imposed upon them; and when the distance between them is such, as appears sufficient for supporting the weight of the roof, we consider the house as well or as properly proportioned. When any of these circumstances, on the contrary, are different; when the walls are either so high as to seem insecure, or the roof so large as to seem too heavy for its support, or the side walls so distant as to beget an opinion of its insecurity, we say, that the building, in such particulars, is ill-proportioned. In such cases, what we mean by proportion, is merely fitness for the ends of stability and support; and as this fitness cannot be very accurately measured, and is in itself capable of wide limits, there are accordingly no accurate proportions of this kind, and no architect has ever attempted to settle them. The general conclusions that we have formed from experience, with regard to the fitness of such forms, are the sole guides of our opinion with respect to these proportions. It may be observed also, that our sentiments of the proportions of such buildings depend upon the nature of the buildings, and even upon the materials of which they are composed. Gothic buildings, of which we know the walls are considerably thicker than those of modern days, admit of greater height, and of a greater appearance of weight in the roof, than buildings of the present age. A house built of brick or of wood, does not admit of the same height of wall, &c., with a house built of stone, because the walls are seldom so strong. A house which is united with others, admits of greater height than if it stood alone, because we conceive it to be supported by the adjoining houses. And a building which has no roof, or nothing which it appears to support, as a tower, or spire, admits of a much greater height than any other species of building. These principles are all that seem to regulate the external proportions of simple buildings; all so obviously depending upon fitness, that it is unnecessary to illustrate them further.

It is not in such buildings, accordingly, that any very accurate external proportions have ever been settled. This is peculiar to what are called the orders of architecture, in which the whole genius of the art has been displayed, and in which the proportions are settled with a certainty *so absolute, as to forbid* almost the attempt at innovation.

There are generally said to be five orders of architecture, viz., the Tuscan, the Doric, the Ionic, the Corinthian, and the Composite. There are properly, however, only four; and some writers have further reduced them to three. What constitutes an order, is its proportions, not its ornaments. The Composite having the same proportions with the Corinthian, though very different in respect of its ornaments, is properly therefore considered only as a corrupted Corinthian.

Every order consists of three great parts or divisions; the base, the column, and the entablature; and the governing proportions relate to this division. The whole of them compose the wall, or what answers to the wall of a common building, and supports the roof.

There is one great difference, however, to be observed between a common wall, and that assemblage of parts which constitutes an order. A common wall is intended to support a roof, and derives its proportions in a great measure from this destination. To an order, the consideration of the roof is unnecessary. It is complete without any roof; and, where a roof is necessary, it is generally so contrived as not to appear. The weight which is supported, or which appears to be supported in an order, is the entablature. The fitness of a wall consists in its appearing adequate to the support of the roof. The fitness of an order, or of the proportions of an order, it should seem also, from analogy, reasonable to conclude, consists in their appearing adequate to the support of the entablature, or of the weight which is imposed upon them.

That this is really the case, and that it is from their being expressive to us of this fitness, that the proportions of these different orders appear beautiful, may perhaps seem probable, from the following considerations.

1. The appearance of these proportions themselves, seems very naturally to lead us to this conclusion. In all the orders, the fitness of the parts to the support of the peculiar weight, or appearance of weight, in the entablature, is apparent to every person, and constitutes an undoubted part of the pleasure we receive from them. In the Tuscan, where the entablature is heavier than in the rest, the column and base are proportionably stronger. In the Corinthian, where the entablature is lightest, the column and base are proportionable slighter. In the Doric and Ionic, which are between these extremes, the forms of the column and base are, in the same manner, proportioned to the reciprocal weights of their entablatures; being neither so strong as the one, nor so slight as the other. If the beauty of such proportions is altogether independent of fitness, and derived from the immediate constitution of our nature, it is difficult to account for this coincidence; and as the beauty of fitness in these several cases is universally allowed, it is altogether unphilosophical, to substitute other causes of the same effect, until the insufficiency of this cause is clearly pointed out.

2. The language of mankind, upon this subject, seems to confirm the same opinion. Whenever we either speak or think of the proportions of these different orders, the circumstances of weight and support enter both into our consideration and our expression. The term proportion, in its general acceptation, implies them; and if this term is not used, the same idea and the same pleasure may be communicated by terms expressive of fitness for the support of weight. Heaviness, and slightness or insufficiency, are the terms most generally used to express a deviation, on either side, from the proper relation; both of them obviously including the consideration of support, and expressing the want of proportion. When it is said that a base, a column, or an entablature is disproportioned, it is the same thing as saying that this part is unfitted to the rest, and inadequate to the proper end of the building. When it is said, on the other hand, that all these several parts are properly adjusted to their end, that the base appears just sufficient for the support of the column, and both for that of the entablature, every person immediately concludes that the parts are perfectly proportioned: and, I apprehend, it is very possible to give a man a perfect conception of the beauty of these proportions, and to make him feel it in the strongest manner, without ever mentioning to him the name of proportion, but merely by explaining them to him under the consideration of fitness, and by showing him from examples, that these forms are the most proper which can be devised for the end to which they are destined. If our perception of the beauty of proportion, in such cases, were altogether independent of any such considerations, I think that these circumstances in language could not possibly take place; and that it would be as possible to explain the nature and beauty of proportion by terms expressive of sound or colour, as by terms expressive of fitness or propriety.

3. The natural sentiments of mankind on this subject, seem to have a different progress from what they would naturally have, if there were any absolute beauty in such proportions discoverable by the eye. It cannot surely be imagined, that an infant will perceive, or does perceive, the beauty of such proportions, in the same manner that he perceives the objects of any other external sense. It is not found, either, that the generality of mankind, even when come to mature age, express any sense of the absolute beauty of such objects. It is true, indeed, that, very early in life, we are sensible of disproportion in building, because the ideas of bulk and support are so early and so necessarily acquired, and the eye is so habituated to judge of weight from visible figure, that what is fit for the support of weight, is very soon generally ascertained. What a common person, therefore, expresses upon the view of such proportions, is rather satisfaction than delight. It is not the proportions which most affect him: it is the magnificence, the grandeur, and the costliness which such buildings usually display:

and though he is much pleased with such expressions, he is generally silent with regard to the beauty of those proportions with which connoisseurs are so much enraptured. If proportion, on the contrary, were something absolutely beautiful in such objects, the progress of taste would be reversed; the admiration of the infant would be given to these proportions, long before he was able to judge of their fitness; and the satisfaction which arises from the expression of fitness, would be the last ingredient in his pleasure, instead of being, as it now is, being the first.

4. The nature of these proportions themselves seems very strongly to indicate their dependence upon the expression of fitness. The beauty of such forms (on the supposition of their absolute and independent beauty) must consist either in their beauty, considered as individual objects, or in their relation to each other. If the effect arises from the nature of the individual forms, then it must obviously follow, that such forms or proportions must be beautiful in all cases. I think, however, that there is no reason to believe this to be the case. The base of a column, for instance, (taken by itself, and independent of its ornaments, which in this inquiry are entirely to be excluded from consideration), is not a more beautiful form than many others that may be given to the same quality of matter. The peculiar form which its proportions give it, is very far from being beautiful in every other case, as would necessarily happen, if it were beautiful in itself, and independent of every expression. A plain stone of the same magnitude may surely be carved into very different forms, from those which constitute the bases of any of the orders, and may still be beautiful. In the same manner, the column (considered, as in the former case, merely in relation to its peculiar form, and independent of its ornaments) is not more beautiful as a form, and perhaps not so beautiful as many other forms of a similar kind. The trunk of many trees, the mast of a ship, the long and slender gothic column, and many other similar objects, are to the full as beautiful, when considered merely as forms, without relation to any end, as any of the columns in architecture. If, on the contrary, these forms were beautiful in themselves, and as individual objects, no other similar forms could be equally beautiful, but such as had the same proportions. The same observation will apply equally to the form of the entablature. It would appear, therefore, that it is not from any absolute beauty in these forms, considered individually, that our opinion of their beauty in composition arises.

If it is said on the other hand, that the beauty of proportion, in such cases, arises from the relation of these parts, and that there is something in the relation of such forms and magnitudes, in itself beautiful, independent of any consideration of fitness, there seem to be equal difficulties. Besides the relation of fitness for the support of

weight, the only relations which take place among these parts are the relations of length and breadth, and the relation of magnitude. If this beauty arose from the relation of length, it is necessary to show that such a proportion of three parts in point of length, is solely and permanently beautiful. If, from the relation of breadth, there is the same necessity of showing, that such a proportion of three parts in point of breadth is as permanently beautiful. If from both together, then the same proportions only ought to be felt as beautiful, in all cases to which the relations of length and breadth can apply. If again, this beauty arose from the relation of magnitude, it is necessary, in the same manner, to show, that three magnitudes or quantities of matter, have in fact no other beautiful proportions but those which take place in such orders. But as it is very obvious, that there is no foundation for supposing any such law in our nature, and that, on the contrary, in innumerable cases of all such relations, different and contrary proportions are beautiful, it cannot be supposed that such proportions are absolutely beautiful from any of these relations.

The only relation, therefore, that remains, is the relation of fitness; and if the same inquiry is carried on, I believe it will soon be found, that a certain proportion of parts is necessarily demanded by this relation; and very probably, also, that this certain proportion is in fact that of each of these orders, according to the particular bulk or weight that is given.

If an order is considered as an assemblage of weight, and parts to support that weight, our experience immediately leads us to conceive a proper relation of these parts to their end. If the entablature be considered as the weight, then of course a certain form and size in the column is demanded for the support of it, and in the base for the support of both. A plain stone, for instance, set upon its end, has no proportion further than for the purpose of stability. If it appears firm, it has all the proportions we desire or demand; and its form may be varied in a thousand ways, without interfering with our sense of its proportion. Place a column, or any other weight, upon this stone; immediately another proportion is demanded, viz., its proportion to the support of this weight. The form supported, however, has no proportion further than that which is necessary for its stability, or for continuing it in its situation. It may be more or less beautiful in point of form, from other considerations, but not upon account of its proportion. Above this, again, place an additional body; immediately the intermediate form demands a new proportion, viz., to the weight it supports; and the first part, or the base, demands also another proportion, in consideration of the additional weight which is thus imposed upon it. In this supposition, it is obvious, that the consideration of fitness alone, leads us to expect a certain proportion among each of these parts: the parts are beautiful or pleasing, just

as they answer to this demand; and where the parts are few, and experiments easy, it seems not difficult, at last, to arrive at that perfect proportion which satisfies the eye, as sufficient for the purposes of support and stability. If we leave, therefore, everything else out of consideration, the consideration of fitness alone seems sufficient to account both for the origin of such proportions in architecture, and for the pleasure which attends the observation of them.

Although, however, the influence of the expression of fitness upon the beauty of proportion should be allowed, and the doctrine of the original beauty of proportion should be deserted, as inconsistent with experience, yet it may still be doubted whether this expression is sufficient to account for the delight which most men feel from the orders of architecture: and it may naturally be asked, why mankind have so long adhered to these forms, without attempting to deviate from them, if they are not solely and peculiarly beautiful. The satisfaction we feel from the observation of fitness, it may be said, is a moderate and feeble pleasure, when compared with that delight with which the models of architecture are surveyed: and the uniform adherence of men to the established proportions, is too strong a proof of their absolute or peculiar beauty, to be opposed by any arguments of a distant or metaphysical kind.

With regard to the first of these objections, I acknowledge that the mere consideration of fitness is insufficient to account for the pleasure which is generally derived from the established orders: but I apprehend, that this pleasure arises from very different causes than from their proportions, and that, in fact, when these proportions only are considered, the pleasure which is generally felt, is not greater than that which we experience, when we perceive, in any great work, the proper relation of means to an end.

The proportions of these orders, it is to be remembered, are distinct subjects of beauty from the ornaments with which they are embellished, from the magnificence with which they are executed, from the purposes of elegance they are intended to serve, or the scenes of grandeur they are destined to adorn. It is in such scenes, however, and with such additions, that we are accustomed to observe them; and while we feel the effect of all these accidental associations, we are seldom willing to examine what are the causes of the complex emotion we feel, and readily attribute to the nature of the architecture itself, the whole pleasure which we enjoy. But besides these, there are other associations we have with these forms, that still more powerfully serve to command our admiration; for they are the Grecian orders; they derive their origin from those times, and were the ornament of those countries, which are most hallowed in our imaginations; and it is difficult for us to see them, even in their modern copies, without feeling them operate upon our minds, as relics of those polished nations

where they first arose, and of that greater people by whom they were afterwards borrowed. While this species of architecture is attended with so many and so pleasing associations, it is difficult even for a man of reflection to distinguish between the different sources of his emotion; or, in the moments in which this delight is felt, to ascertain what is the exact portion of his pleasure which is to be attributed to these proportions alone: and two different causes combine to lead us to attribute to the style of architecture itself, the beauty which arises from many other associations. In the first place, while it is under our eye, this architecture itself is the great object of our regard, and the central object of all these associations. It is the material sign, in fact, of all the various affecting qualities which are connected with it; and it disposes us in this, as in every other case, to attribute to the sign, the effect which is produced by the qualities signified. When we reflect, upon the other hand, in our calmer moments, upon the source of our emotion, another motive arises to induce us to consider these proportions as the sole or the principal cause of our pleasure; for these proportions are the only qualities of the object which are perfectly or accurately ascertained: they have received the assent of all ages since their discovery; they are the acknowledged objects of beauty; and having thus got possession of one undoubted principle, our natural love of system induces us to ascribe the whole of the effect to this principle alone; and easily satisfies our minds, by saving us the trouble of a long and tedious investigation. That this cause has had its full effect in this case, will, I believe, appear very evident to those who attended to the enthusiasm with which, in general, the writers on architecture speak of the beauty of proportion, and compare it with the common sentiments of men upon the subject of this beauty. Both these causes conspire to mislead our judgment in this point, and to induce us to attribute to one quality, in such objects, that beauty which, in truth, results from many united qualities.

It will be found, I believe, on the other hand, that the real beauty of such proportions is in fact not greater than that which we feel in many cases where we perceive means properly adapted to their end; and that the admiration we feel from the prospect of the orders of antiquity, is necessarily to be ascribed to other causes besides these proportions. The common people, undoubtedly, feel a very inferior emotion of beauty from such objects, to that which is felt by men of liberal education, because they have none of those associations which modern education so early connects with them. The man of letters feels also a weaker emotion than that which is felt by the connoisseur or the architect, because he has none of the associations which belong to the art, and never considers them in relation to the genius, or skill, or invention which they display. Deprive these orders, in the same manner, of their customary ornaments, and leave only the great and

governing proportions; or change, only in the slightest degree, their forms, without altering these proportions; and their beauty will be in a great measure destroyed. Preserve, on the other hand, the whole of the orders, but diminish in a great degree their scale: and though they will still be beautiful, yet their beauty will be infinitely inferior to that which they have upon their usual scale of magnificence. It is possible, in the form of a candlestick, or some other trifling utensil, to imitate with accuracy, any of these orders. It is possible, in many of the common articles of furniture, to imitate some of the greatest models of this art: but who does not know that their great beauty in such an employment would be lost?—yet still their proportions are the same, if their proportions are the sole cause of their beauty. Destroy, in the same manner, all the associations of elegance, of magnificence, of costliness, and still more than all, of antiquity, which are so strongly connected with such forms, and I conceive every man will acknowledge, that the pleasure which their proportions would afford, would not, in fact, be greater than that which we feel in other cases, where means are properly adapted to their end.

With regard to the second objection, viz., that the uniform adherence of mankind to these proportions, is in itself a sufficient proof of their sole or absolute beauty; I conceive that many other causes of this adherence may be assigned, and that these causes are sufficient to account for the effect, without supposing any peculiar law of our nature, by which such proportions are originally beautiful. They who have had opportunities of remarking the extensive influence which the associations of antiquity have upon our minds, will be convinced that this cause alone has had a very powerful effect in producing this uniformity of opinion; and they who consider, that the real effect of proportion is to produce only a very moderate delight, will easily perceive, that an almost insurmountable obstacle has been placed to every invention or improvement in this art, when such inventions could oppose only a calm and rational pleasure to that enthusiasm which is founded upon so many, and so interesting associations.

But besides these, there are other causes in the nature of the art itself, which sufficiently account for the permanence of taste upon this subject. In every production of human labour, the influence of variety is limited by two circumstances, viz., by the costliness and the permanence of the materials upon which that labour is employed. Wherever the materials of any object, whether of use or of luxury, are costly; wherever the original price of such objects is great, the influence of the love of variety is diminished; the objects have a great intrinsic value, independent of their particular form or fashion; and as the destruction of the form is in most cases the destruction of the subject itself, the same form is adhered to with little variation. In dress, for instance, in which the variation of fashion is more observable

than in most other subjects, it is those parts of dress which are least costly, of which the forms are most frequently changed; in proportion as the original value increases, the disposition to variety diminishes; and in some objects, which are extremely costly, as in the case of jewels, there is no change of fashion whatever, except in circumstances different from the value of the objects themselves, as in their setting or disposition. Of all the fine arts, however, architecture is by far the most costly. The wealth of individuals is frequently dissipated by it; and even the revenue of nations, is equal only to very slow, and very infrequent productions of this kind. The value, therefore, of such objects, is in a great measure independent of their forms; the invention of men is little excited to give an additional value to subjects, which in themselves are so valuable; and the art itself, after it has arrived at a certain necessary degree of perfection, remains in a great measure stationary, both from the infrequency of cases in which invention can be employed, and from the little demand there is for the exercise of that invention. The nature of the Grecian orders very plainly indicates, that they were originally executed in wood, and that they were settled before the Greeks had begun to make use of stone in their buildings. From the period that stone was employed, and that of course public buildings became more costly, little further progress seems to have been made in the art. The costliness of the subject, in this as in every other case, gave a kind of permanent value to the form by which it was distinguished.

If, besides the costliness of the subject, it is also permanent and durable, this character is still further increased. Those productions, of which the materials are perishable, and must often be renewed, are from their nature subjected to the influence of variety. Chairs and tables, for instance, and the other common articles of furniture, cannot well last above a few years, and very often not so long. In such articles, accordingly, there is room for the invention of the artist to display itself; and as the subject itself is of no very great value, and may derive a considerable one from its form, a strong motive is given to the exercise of this invention. But buildings may last, and are intended to last for centuries. The life of man is very inadequate to the duration of such productions: and the present period of the world, though old with respect to those arts which are employed upon perishable subjects, is yet young in relation to an art, which is employed upon so durable materials as those of architecture. Instead of a few years, therefore, centuries must probably pass before such productions demand to be renewed; and, long before that period is elapsed, the sacredness of antiquity is acquired by the subject itself, and a new motive given for the preservation of similar forms. In every country, accordingly, the same effect has taken place: and the same causes which have thus served to produce among us, for so many years, an

uniformity of taste with regard to the style of Grecian architecture, have produced also among the nations of the east, for a much longer course of time, a similar uniformity of taste with regard to their ornamental style of architecture; and have perpetuated among them the same forms, which were in use among their forefathers, before the Grecian orders were invented.

It is impossible for me to pursue these speculations, with regard to the foundation of beauty in architecture, to the extent to which they would lead. The hints which I have now offered, may perhaps satisfy the reader, that the beauty of the external proportions of architecture, is to be ascribed to their expression of fitness; that this beauty is in fact not greater than what is often felt from similar expression in other subjects: and that both the admiration of mankind, and the uniformity of their taste with regard to the style of Grecian architecture, is to be ascribed to other causes, than any absolute or independent beauty in the proportions by which it is distinguished.

IV.—OF THE INTERNAL PROPORTIONS OF ARCHITECTURE.—By the internal proportions of architecture, I mean that disposition of the three dimensions of length, breadth, and height, which is necessary to render a room or apartment beautiful or pleasing in its form. Every man is able at first sight to say, whether a room is well or ill-proportioned; although perhaps it is difficult to say, what is the principle from which this propriety is determined. Many of the writers upon architecture consider certain proportions of this kind as beautiful from the original constitution of our nature, and without relation to any expression. I apprehend, on the contrary, that the beauty of proportion, in this, as in the former case, arises from its expression of fitness.

I have already observed, that a plain wall is susceptible of no other proportion, than that proportion of height which is necessary for the expression of strength or stability. If it appears firm and sufficient, it has all the proportion we desire. Suppose any space enclosed by four walls, the same proportion remains: we require that the height should be such as to indicate stability; and if this is answered, we require no more. The form of the enclosure may be more or less beautiful, from other causes; but we never say that it is beautiful on account of its proportion. Add a roof to this enclosure, and immediately a variety of other proportions are demanded, from the consideration of the weight which is now to be supported. If the walls are very high, they have the appearance of insufficiency for this support; if very low, they indicate an unnecessary and unusual weight in the roof. A certain proportion, therefore, in point of height, is demanded. If the length of the enclosure is great, the roof appears also to be insufficiently supported; and, from the laws of perspective, its weight seems to increase as it retires from the eye. A certain proportion,

therefore, in point of length, is demanded. If, in the last case, the breadth of the enclosure is very great, a still stronger conviction of insufficiency arises from the distance of the supporting walls. A certain proportion, therefore, in point of breadth, is demanded, for the same end. Wherever a form of this kind is produced; wherever walls are united for the support of a roof, these proportions are necessarily required; and, so far are they from being remote from common observation, that there is no man who is not immediately sensible of any great violation of them. Every apartment, however, is an enclosure of this kind. It seems natural, therefore, to imagine, that the proportions of an apartment will be pleasing, when they appear sufficient for the full and easy support of the roof; and that they are beautiful, from being expressive of this fitness. This proposition may perhaps be more obvious from the following considerations.

1. It may be observed, that the real beauty of proportion, in this case, is not greater than that which attends the expression of fitness in other cases; and that this expression is perfectly sufficient to account for the whole of the delight which men in general feel from these objects. Artists, indeed, very frequently talk with enthusiasm of the beauty of such proportions, and are willing to ascribe to the proportions themselves, that emotion which they in reality receive from the associations which their art and their education have connected with them: but whatever may be the language of artists, the uniform language of the bulk of mankind is very different. What they feel from the appearance of a well-proportioned room, is satisfaction, rather than positive delight: they are hurt with the want of proportion; but they are not greatly enraptured with its presence. What they are delighted with, in apartments where this beauty has been studied, is their decoration and their furniture; the convenience, or elegance, or magnificence which they exhibit. Every one knows, accordingly, that the best-proportioned room, before it is finished, and while nothing but its proportions are discernible, produces only a very calm and moderate pleasure, in no respect greater than that which we feel from a well-constructed machine, or convenient piece of furniture. Remove even the furniture from the most finished apartment, and the delight which we receive from it is immediately diminished; yet the proportions are altogether independent of the furniture, and are much more discernible when it is removed. No person, in the same manner, remarks the proportions of the miserable room of a cottage, or any other mean dwelling: yet the most regular proportions may, and sometimes are to be found in a cottage. If the apartments in such a building were purposely constructed according to the most rigorous law of proportion, I apprehend that they would produce no emotion greater than that of simple satisfaction; yet if these proportions were themselves originally beautiful, they ought in

this case to produce the same delight as in the senate-house or the palace. If therefore (as seems to be evident) certain proportions are demanded in a room, as expressive of fitness; and if the emotion that is produced by the established and regular proportions, is no greater than that which we receive, in other cases, from the expression of this quality, it seems reasonable to conclude, that the proportions are in fact beautiful, from the expression of this fitness.

2. The general language of mankind seems to confirm the same opinion. Whoever has had occasion to attend to the common language of men on this subject, must have observed, that the usual terms by which they express their sense of proportion, or of the want of proportion, in a room, are those of lightness and heaviness; terms which obviously suppose the belief of weight and of support, and which could not have been used, if the beauty of form, in this case, did not depend upon the fitness or propriety of this relation. The terms proportion and disproportion are in truth altogether unintelligible to the common people; and to describe to them any apartment in such terms, leaves them as ignorant as ever of its beauty; but there is hardly any man who does not readily apprehend, that an apartment is of a pleasing form, when he is told that the walls are neither too high, nor too low, nor too wide for the support of the roof; or who will not as readily apprehend the contrary, when he is told, that, in either of these respects, an appearance of insecurity is produced. A room which is low, or wide in the roof, is in general said to be heavy. A room, on the contrary, which is high in the roof, and in which this weight seems to be properly and easily sustained, is said to be light. If we were under the necessity of interpreting to a common person the language of artists, or of explaining to him in what the beauty of form in this respect consists, I apprehend, we should naturally do it, by representing it to him as light, or as so contrived that the support was perfectly adapted to the weight: and, on the other hand, if we were to explain to him in what respect any room was deficient, we should as naturally do it, by pointing out to him where the construction was deficient in fitness, and had the appearance of heaviness, or insufficient support. In this manner, also, without ever hearing of the terms of proportion or disproportion, or considering the subject in any other light than that of fitness, he might acquire a perfect conception of this beauty; and be led, in fact, to the same conclusions with regard to the proper composition of these dimensions, that are already established under the title of proportions. If these proportions, however, were originally and independently beautiful, no explanation of them from another sense could possibly be intelligible; and the substitution of the term fitness would be as unmeaning as that of sound or colour. I am far from contending, that the generality of men are very accurate in their notions of the

propriety of the relation of weight and support, or very proper judges of the perfection of proportion in this respect. But I apprehend, that the terms of heaviness and lightness which they employ, and universally understand, are a sufficient evidence of the principle upon which their judgments are formed; and that they show that it is from the expression of fitness for the support of weight that their admiration is determined.

The same observation which was made with regard to the progress of taste, in the external proportions of this art, is applicable also to its internal proportions. If they were originally and independently beautiful, the earlier period of life would be most remarkable for the discovery of them; and it would be only in later life, and in proportion to our experience, that we could discover the additional beauty which they derive from their fitness. Every one knows, however, that the real progress is different; that during the years of infancy and childhood, no sensibility whatever is shown to this beauty; that it is only as our experience enables us to judge of the relation between weight and support, that we begin to be sensible of it; that they whose occupations have prevented them from forming any very accurate judgment of this kind, are proportionably deficient in the accuracy of their taste; and that, in general, the bulk of mankind have no further conception of this species of beauty, than what arises from the consideration of fitness for the support of weight.

3. If there were any absolute and independent beauty in such proportions, it seems reasonable to imagine, that every violation of them would be equally painful; and that the deviation from them in each of these dimensions, would be attended with a similar emotion of discontent. All these proportions relate either to the height, the length, or the breadth, of an apartment. Every man, however, must have observed, that it is with very different feelings he regards the want of proportion in these three respects. Too great a height in a room is not nearly so painful as too little height; and too great a length produces a trifling emotion of discontent, compared with that which we feel from too great a breadth. Whether a room is a few feet too high, or too long, few people observe; but every one observes a much less disproportion, either in the diminution of its height, or in the extent of its breadth. The most general faults, accordingly, which common people find with apartments, is either in their being too low, or too broad. The proportions of height and length they seldom attend to, if they are not greatly violated. These facts, though not easily reconcileable with the doctrine of the absolute beauty of these proportions, agree very minutely with the account which I have given of the origin of this beauty. If this beauty arises from the expression of fitness, the proportions, of which the violation should affect us the most, ought to be those which are most necessary for the production

of this fitness. These, however, very obviously, are either too little height, or too great breadth; the first immediately indicating an unusual weight in the roof, and the other expressing the greatest possible insufficiency for the support of this weight. The most unpleasing form of an apartment, accordingly, that it is possible to contrive, is that of being at the same time very broad, and very low in the roof. Too great height, and too great length, on the other hand, have not so disagreeable expressions. By the first, at least, fitness is, in no material degree, violated: and what we feel from it is chiefly a slight emotion of discontent, from its being unsuited to the general character or destination of rooms. Our indifference to the second disproportion, or to too great length, arises from a different cause, viz., from our knowledge that the beams which support the roof are laid latitudinally, and our consequent belief that the difference of length makes no difference with regard to the sufficiency of support. Change, accordingly, in any apartment, this disposition of the beams; let the spectator perceive, that they are placed according to the length, and not, as usual, according to the breadth of the room; and whatever may be its other dimensions, or however great length these dimensions may require, no greater length will be permitted without pain, than that which is expressive of perfect sufficiency in the beams for the support of the roof. As there is thus no uniform emotion which attends the perception of these proportions, as would necessarily be the case, if their beauty were perceived by any peculiar sense; and as the emotion which we in fact receive from them is different, according to their different expressions of fitness, it seems reasonable to ascribe their beauty to this expression, and not to any original beauty in the proportions themselves.

4. If there were any original beauty in such proportions, they would necessarily be as certain as the objects of any other sense; and there would be one precise proportion of the three dimensions of length, breadth, and height, solely and permanently beautiful. Every one knows, however, that this is not the case. No artist has ever presumed to fix on such proportions; and so far is there from being any permanent beauty in any one relation of these dimensions, that the same proportions which are beautiful in one apartment, are not beautiful in others. From whatever causes these variations in the beauty of proportion arise, they conclude immediately against the doctrine of their original beauty. There seem, however, to be three principal causes of this difference in our opinion of the beauty of proportion, which I must confine myself barely to mention, without attempting the full illustration of them.

1. The first is the consideration of the weight supported. As all roofs are supported by the side-walls, and composed in general of the uniform material of wood, there is a certain, though not a very precise

limit which we impose to their breadth, from our knowledge that, if they pass this limit, they are insufficient and insecure. To the length and to the height, on the other hand, we do not impose any such rigorous limits; because neither of these proportions interfere materially with our opinion of security. Within this limit of breadth, there may be several proportions to the length and height, which shall be universally pleasing. But beyond this limit, these proportions cease to be pleasing, and become painful in the same degree that they pass this boundary of apparent security. Thus, a room of twelve feet square, may constitute a pleasing form; but a room of sixty feet square would be positively disagreeable. A room twenty-four feet in length, by eighteen in breadth, may be sufficiently pleasing; but a room sixty feet in length, by fifty in breadth, would constitute a very unpleasing form. Many other instances might easily be produced, to show that the beauty of every apartment depends on the appearance of proper support to the roof; and that, on this account, the same proportion of breadth that is beautiful in one case, becomes positively painful in others.

2. A second cause of this difference in our opinion of the beauty of proportion, arises from the character of the apartment. Every one must have observed, that the different forms of rooms, their difference of magnitude, and various other causes, give them distinct characters, as those of gaiety, simplicity, solemnity, grandeur, magnificence, &c. No room is ever beautiful, which has not some such pleasing character; the terms by which we express this beauty are significant of these characters; and however regular the proportions of an apartment may be, if they do not correspond to the general expression, we consider the form as defective or imperfect. Thus, the same proportion of height which is beautiful in a room of gaiety, or cheerfulness, would be felt as a defect in an apartment of which the character was severity or melancholy. The same proportion of length which is pleasing in an elegant or convenient room, would be a defect in an apartment of magnificence or splendour. The great proportion of breadth which suits a temple or a senate-house, as according with the severe and solemn character of the apartment, would be positively unpleasing in any room which was expressive of cheerfulness or lightness. In proportion, also, as apartments differ in size, different proportions become necessary in this respect, to accord with the characters which the difference of magnitude produces. The same proportion of height which is pleasing in a cheerful room, would be too little for the hall of a great castle, where vastness is necessary to agree with the sublimity of its character; and the same relation of breadth and height which is so wonderfully affecting in the Gothic cathedral, although at variance with all the classic rules of proportion, would be both absurd and painful, in the forms of any common apartment. In general, I

believe it will be found, that the great and positive beauty of apartments arises from their character; that where no character is discovered, the generality of men express little admiration even at the most regular proportions; that every difference of character requires a correspondent difference in the composition of the dimensions; and that this demand is satisfied, or a beautiful form produced, only when the composition of the different proportions is such as to produce one pure and unmingled expression.

3. The third cause of the difference of our opinion of the beauty of proportion, arises from the destination of the apartment. All apartments are intended for some use or purpose of human life. We demand, therefore, that the form of them should be accommodated to these ends; and wherever the form is at variance with the end, however regular or generally beautiful its proportions may be, we are conscious of an emotion of dissatisfaction and discontent. The most obvious illustration of the dependence of the beauty of proportion, on this species of utility, may be taken from the common system that natural taste has dictated in the proportion of different apartments in great houses. The hall, the saloon, the antichamber, the drawing-room, the dining-room, the bed-chamber, the dressing-room, the library, the chapel, &c., have all different forms and different proportions. Change these proportions; give to the dining-room the proportions of the saloon, to the dressing-room those of the library, to the chapel the proportions of the antichamber, or to the drawing-room those of the hall, &c., and every one will then consider them as unpleasing and defective forms, because they are unfitted to the ends they are destined to serve.

The observations which I have now offered on the beauty of the internal proportions of architecture, seem to afford sufficient evidence for concluding, in general,

That the beauty of these proportions is not original and independent, but that it arises, in all cases, from the expression of some species of fitness.

The fitness, however, which such proportions may express, is of different kinds; and the reader who will pursue the slight hints that I have suggested upon the subject, may perhaps agree with me in the following conclusions.

1. That one beauty of these proportions arises from their expression of fitness for the support of the weight imposed.

2. That a second source of their beauty consists in their expression of fitness for the preservation of the character of the apartment.

3. That a third source of their beauty consists in their expression of fitness, in the general form, for its peculiar purpose or end.

The two first expressions constitute the permanent beauty, and the third the accidental beauty of an apartment.

In every beautiful apartment the two first expressions must be united. An apartment, of which the proportions express the most perfect fitness for the support of the roof, but which is itself expressive of no character, is beheld rather with satisfaction than delight, and is never remarked as beautiful. The beauty of character, on the other hand, is neglected, if the proportions of the apartment are such as to indicate insufficiency or insecurity. The first constitutes what may be called the negative, and the second the positive beauty of an apartment; and every apartment (considered only in relation to its proportions, and without any respect to its end) will be beautiful in the same degree in which these expressions are united, or in which the same proportions that produce the appearance of perfect sufficiency, agree also in maintaining the general character of the apartment.

When, however, the apartment is considered in relation to its end, the beauty of its proportions is determined, in a great measure, by their expression of fitness for this end. To this, as to every other species of apartment, the expression of security is necessary; and such an apartment will accordingly be beautiful, when these expressions coincide.

The most perfect beauty that the proportions of an apartment can exhibit, will be when all these expressions unite; or when the same relations of dimension which are productive of the expression of sufficiency, agree also in the preservation of character, and in the indication of use.

PART III.—OF THE INFLUENCE OF UTILITY UPON THE BEAUTY OF FORMS.—The third source of the relative beauty of forms, is utility. That the expression of this quality is sufficient to give beauty to forms, and that forms of the most different and opposite kinds become beautiful from this expression, are facts which have often been observed, and which are within the reach of every person's observation. I shall not therefore presume to add any illustrations on a subject, which has already been so beautifully illustrated by Mr. Smith, in the most eloquent work, "Theory of Moral Sentiments" (See Murray's Reprint, 1870) on the subject of morals, that modern Europe has produced.

SEC. III.—OF THE ACCIDENTAL BEAUTY OF FORMS.—Beside the expressions that have now been enumerated, and which constitute the two great and permanent sources of the beauty of forms, there are others of a casual or accidental kind, which have a very observable effect in producing the same emotion in our minds, and which constitute what may be called the accidental beauty of forms. Such associations, instead of being common to all mankind, are peculiar

to the individual. They take their rise from education, from peculiar habits of thought, from situation, from profession; and the beauty they produce is felt only by those whom similar causes have led to the formation of similar associations. There are few men who have not associations of this kind with particular forms, from their being familiar to them from their infancy, and thus connected with the gay and pleasing imagery of that period of life; from their connexion with scenes to which they look back with pleasure, or people whose memories they love: and such forms, from this accidental connexion, are never seen, without being in some measure the signs of all those affecting and endearing recollections. When such associations are of a more general kind, and are common to many individuals, they sometimes acquire a superiority over the more permanent principles of beauty, and determine even for a time the taste of nations. The admiration which is paid to the forms of architecture, of furniture, of ornament, which we derive from antiquity, though undoubtedly very justly due to these forms themselves, originates, in the greater part of mankind, from the associations which they connect with these forms. These associations, however, are merely accidental; and were these forms much inferior in point of beauty, the admiration which modern Europe bestows on them, would not be less enthusiastic than it is now. There are even cases where, in a few years, the taste of a nation, in such respects, undergoes an absolute change, from associations of a different kind becoming general or fashionable; and where the beautiful form is always found to correspond to the prevailing association. They who are learned in the history of dress, will recollect many instances of this kind. In every other species of ornament it is also observable. One instance will be sufficient.

In the succession of fashions which have taken place in the article of ornamental furniture, within these few years, every one must have observed how much their beauty has been determined by accidental associations of this kind, and how little the real and permanent beauty of such forms has been regarded. Some years ago, every article of this kind was made in what was called the Chinese taste; and, however fantastic and uncouth the forms in reality were, they were yet universally admired, because they brought to mind those images of eastern magnificence and splendour, of which we have heard so much, and which we are always willing to believe, because they are distant. To this succeeded the Gothic taste. Everything was now made in imitation, not indeed of Gothic furniture, but in imitation of the forms and ornaments of Gothic halls and cathedrals. This slight association, however, was sufficient to give beauty to such forms, because it led to ideas of Gothic manners and adventure, which had become fashionable in the world from many beautiful compositions both in prose and verse. The taste which now reigns is that of the antique.

Everything we now use, is made in imitation of those models which have been lately discovered in Italy; and they serve in the same manner to occupy our imagination, by leading to those recollections of Grecian or Roman taste, which have so much the possession of our minds, from the studies and amusements of our youth.

I shall only further observe upon this subject, that all such instances of the effect of accidental expression, in bestowing a temporary beauty upon forms, conclude immediately against the doctrine of their absolute or independent beauty; and that they afford a very strong presumption, if not a direct proof, that their permanent beauty arises also from the expressions they permanently convey to us.

From the illustrations that I have offered in this long chapter on the beauty of forms, we seem to have sufficient reason for concluding in general, that no forms, or species of forms, are in themselves originally beautiful; but that their beauty, in all cases, arises from their being expressive to us of some pleasing or affecting qualities.

If the views also that I have presented on the subject are just, we may perhaps still further conclude, that the principal sources of the beauty of forms are, first, the expressions we connect with peculiar forms, either from the form itself, or the nature of the subject thus formed: secondly, the qualities of design, and fitness, and utility, which they indicate: and, thirdly, the accidental associations which we happen to connect with them. The consideration of these different expressions may afford perhaps some general rules, that may not be without their use, to those arts that are employed in the production of beauty.

All forms are either ornamental or useful.

I.—The beauty of merely ornamental forms appears to arise from three sources. 1. From the expression of the form itself. 2. From the expression of design. 3. From accidental expression.

The real and positive beauty, therefore, of every ornamental form, will be in proportion to the nature and the permanence of the expression by which it is distinguished. The strongest and most permanent emotion, however, we can receive from such expressions, is that which arises from the nature of the form itself. The emotion we receive from the expression of design, as I have already shown, is neither so strong nor so permanent; and that which accidental associations produce, perishes often with the year which gave it birth. The beauty of accidental expression, is as variable as the caprice or fancy of mankind. The beauty of the expression of design, varies with every period of art. The beauty which arises from the expression of form itself, is alone permanent, as founded upon the uniform constitution of the human mind. Considering therefore the beauty of forms as constituted by the degree and the permanence of their expression, the following conclusions seem immediately to suggest themselves.

1. That the greatest beauty which ornamental forms can receive will be that which arises from the expression of the form itself.

2. That the next will be that which arises from the expression of design or skill.

3. That the least will be that which arises from accidental or temporary expression.

In all those arts, therefore, that respect the beauty of form, it ought to be the unceasing study of the artist, to disengage his mind from the accidental associations of his age, as well as the common prejudices of his art; to labour to distinguish his productions by that pure and permanent expression, which may be felt in every age; and to disdain to borrow a transitory fame, by yielding to the temporary caprices of his time, or by exhibiting only the display of his own dexterity or skill. Or, if the accidental taste of mankind must be gratified, it is still to be remembered, that it is only in those arts, which are employed upon perishable subjects, that it can be gratified with safety; that in those greater productions of art, which are destined to last for centuries, the fame of the artist must altogether depend upon the permanence of the expression, which he can communicate to his work; and that the only expression which is thus permanent, and which can awaken the admiration of every succeeding age, is that which arises from the nature of form itself, and which is founded upon the uniform constitution of man and of nature.

II.—The beauty of useful forms, arises either from the expression of fitness, or of utility.

With regard to this species of beauty, it is necessary at present only to observe, first, that it is in itself productive of a much weaker emotion, than that which arises from the different sources of ornamental beauty; but, secondly, that this emotion is of a more constant and permanent kind, and much more uniformly fitted to excite the admiration of mankind.

To unite these different kinds of beauty, to dignify ornamental forms also by use; and to raise merely useful forms into beauty, is the great object of ambition among every class of artists. Wherever both these objects can be attained, the greatest possible beauty that form can receive, will be produced; but as this can very seldom be the case, the following rules seem immediately to present themselves, for the direction of the artist.

1. That where the utility of forms is equal, that will be the most beautiful to which the most pleasing expression of form is given.

2. That when those expressions are at variance, when the utility of the form cannot be produced without sacrificing its natural beauty, or when this beauty of form cannot be preserved without sacrificing its utility, that form will be most universally and most permanently beautiful, in which the expresssion of utility is most fully preserved.

To human art, indeed, this union will always be difficult, and often impossible; and the artist, whatever may be his genius, must be content to suffer that sublime distress, which a great mind alone can feel, 'to dedicate his life to the attainment of an ideal beauty, and to die at last without attaining it.' (Sir Josh. Reynolds.) Yet if it is painful to us to feel the limits that are thus imposed to the invention of man, it is still more pleasing to us, from the narrow schools of human art, to turn our regard to the great school of nature, and to observe the stupendous wisdom with which these expressions are united in almost every form. 'And here, I think,' says Mr. Hogarth, 'will be the proper place to speak of a most curious difference between the living machines of nature in respect of fitness, and such poor ones in comparison with them, as men are only capable of making. A clock, by the government's order, has been made by Mr. Harrison for the keeping of true time at sea; which is perhaps one of the most exquisite movements ever made. Happy the ingenious contriver! although the form of the whole, or of every part of this curious machine should be ever so confused, or displeasingly shaped to the eye, and although even its movements should be disagreeable to look at, provided it answers the end proposed; an ornamental composition was no part of his scheme, otherwise than as a polish might be necessary. If ornaments are required to be added to mend its shape, care must be taken that they are no obstruction to the movement itself; and the more, as they would be superfluous as to the main design. But, in nature's machines, how wonderfully do we see beauty and use go hand in hand! Had a machine for this purpose been nature's work, the whole and every individual part might have had exquisite beauty of form, without danger of destroying the exquisiteness of its motion, even as if ornament had been the sole aim; its movements too might have been graceful, without one superfluous tittle added for either of these lovely purposes. Now this is that curious difference between the fitness of nature's machines, and those made by mortal hands.'

The application of this fine observation to innumerable instances both of inanimate and animated forms, it is in the power of every one to make; and I am much more willing to leave the impression which it must make upon every mind entire, than to weaken it by any illustrations of my own.

Chapter V.—Of the Beauty and Sublimity of Motion.

Motion is, in many cases, productive of the emotions of sublimity and beauty. With this quality, accordingly, we have many interesting and affecting associations. These associations arise either from the nature of motion itself, or from the nature of the bodies moved. The

following illustrations may perhaps show, that the beauty and sublimity of motion arises from these associations, and that we have no reason to believe, that this quality of matter is in itself either beautiful or sublime.

I.—All motion is produced either by visible or by invisible power: by some cause which we perceive, or by some which is not the object of sense.

With all motions of the latter kind, we connect the idea of voluntary power; and such motions are in fact expressive to us of the exertion of power. Whether this association is the consequence of experience, or whether it is the effect of an original principle, it is not at present material to inquire. The instance of children, and even of animals, who uniformly infer life, where they perceive motion without any material cause, are sufficient evidences of the fact.

That the sublimity and beauty of motion arises from their expression of power, seems to be evident from the two following considerations.

1. There is no instance where motion, which is the apparent effect of force, is beautiful or sublime. It is impossible to conceive the motion of a body that is dragged or visibly impelled by another body, as either sublime or beautiful.

2. All beautiful or sublime motion is expressed in language by verbs in the active voice. We say, even in common language, that a torrent pours,—a stream glides,—a rivulet winds,—that lightning darts,—that light streams. Change these expressions, by means of any verb in the passive voice, and the whole beauty of their motion is destroyed. In poetical composition, the same circumstance is uniformly observable. If motion were in itself beautiful or sublime, or if any particular kinds of motion were so, these circumstances could not happen; and such motions would still be beautiful or sublime, whether they were expressive of power or not.

The character of power varies according to its degree, and produces, according to this difference, different emotions in our mind. Great power produces an emotion of awe and admiration. Gentle or moderate, or diminutive power, produces an emotion of tenderness, of interest, of affection. To every species of power that is pleasing, the idea of superiority to obstacle is necessary. All power, whether great or small, which is inferior to obstacle, induces the idea of imperfection, and is considered with a kind of dissatisfaction.

These considerations will probably explain a great part of the absolute sublimity and beauty of motion.

Motion differs according to its degree, and according to its direction.

I. Of the degree of motion. All motion, when rapid, is, I apprehend, accompanied with the idea of great power. When slow, on the other hand, with the idea of gentle or diminutive power. For the

truth of this remark, I must appeal to the reader's own observation Rapid motion, accordingly, is sublime; slow motion beautiful.

II. Of the direction of motion. Motion is either in a straight line, in an angular line, or in a sepentine or curvilinear line.

1. Motion in a straight line chiefly derives its expression from its degree. When rapid, it is simply sublime; when slow, it is simply beautiful.

2. Motion in an angular line is expressive of obstruction, or of imperfect power. When considered therefore in itself, and without relation to the body moving, it is simply unpleasing.

3. Motion in curves is expressive of ease, of freedom, of playfulness, and is consequently beautiful.

The truth of this account of our associations with motion, I refer to the examination of the reader. The real beauty and sublimity of the different appearances of motions, seem to me to correspond very accurately with the expressions which the different combinations of the degree, and the direction of motion, convey to us.

1. Rapid motion, in a straight line, is simply expressive of great power. It is accordingly, in general, sublime. Rapid motion in angular lines is expressive of great but imperfect power, of a power which every obstacle is sufficient to overcome. I believe that motion of this kind is accordingly very seldom sublime. Rapid motion in curve lines is expressive of great power, united with ease, freedom, or playfulness. Motion of this kind, accordingly, though more sublime than the preceding, is less sublime than the first species of motion. The course of a torrent, when in a straight line, is more sublime than when it winds into curves, and much more sublime than when it is broken into angles. The impetuous shooting of the eagle would lose much of its sublimity, if it were to deviate from the straight line; and would be simply painful, if it it were to degenerate into an angular line.

2. Slow motion in a straight line, is simply expressive of gentle and delicate power. It is accordingly beautiful. Slow motion in angular lines, is expressive of gentle power, and of imperfection or obstruction. These expressions, however, do not well accord, but mutually destroy each other. Motion of this kind, is, accordingly, very seldom beautiful. Slow motion in curves is expressive of gentle power, united with ease, freedom, and playfulness. It is accordingly peculiarly beautiful. The soft gliding of a stream, the light traces of a summer breeze upon a field of corn, are beautiful when in a straight line; they are much more beautiful when they describe serpentine or winding lines: but they are scarcely beautiful, when their direction is in sharp angles, and sudden deviations.

The most sublime motion is that of rapid motion in a straight line. The most beautiful is that of slow motion in a line of curves. I

humbly apprehend, that these conclusions are not very distant from common experience upon this subject.

II.—Besides these, however, which may be called the permanent expressions of motion, there are others which arise from the nature of the bodies moved, and which have a very obvious effect in giving beauty or sublimity to the peculiar motions by which they are distinguished. Instances of this kind are so familiar, that it will be necessary only to point out a few.

Slow motion is, in general, simply beautiful. Where, however, the body is of great magnitude, slow motion is sublime. The slow motion of a first-rate man-of-war; the slow ascent of a great balloon; the slow march of an embattled army, are all sublime motions, and no person can observe

'The cloud stupendous, from th' Atlantic wave,
High tow'ring sail along the horizon blue,'

without an emotion of this kind.

Rapid motion is in general sublime; yet where the bodies excite only pleasing or moderate affections, motion of this kind becomes beautiful. The rapid shooting of the Aurora Borealis, the quick ascent of fire-works, a sudden stream of light from a small luminous object in the dark, are familiar instances of this kind. The motion of the humming-bird is more rapid perhaps than that of the eagle, yet the motion of the humming-bird is only beautiful.

Motion in angular lines is, in general, productive of an emotion of discontent, rather than of any emotion either of sublimity or beauty. Yet the motion of lightning, which is commonly of this kind, is strikingly sublime. The same appearance in electrical experiments is beautiful.

Slow motion in waving lines, is, in general, the most beautiful of all. But the motion of snakes or of serpents, is of all others the most disagreeable and painful.

In these instances, and many others that might be mentioned, it is obvious, that the sublimity or beauty of the motion arises from the expression or character of the bodies moved; and that, in such cases, the expression of the body predominates over the general expression which we associate with the motion by which it is distinguished.

From the facts I have mentioned, we may conclude,

1. That the beauty and sublimity of motion, arises from the associations we connect either with the motion itself, or with the bodies moved: and,

2. That this sublimity or beauty, in any particular case, will be most perfect, when the expression of the motion, and that of the body moved, coincide.

CHAPTER VI.—OF THE BEAUTY OF THE HUMAN COUNTENANCE, AND FORM.

SEC. I.—INTRODUCTORY.—The preceding inquiries relate only to the beauty and sublimity of inanimate matter. I proceed to consider the origin of the beauty or sublimity which we perceive in the countenance and form of man; the being, amid all the innumerable classes of material existence, who, in this respect, enjoys the most undoubted pre-eminence; and to whom the liberality of nature has been most conspicuous, in accommodating the majesty and beauty of his external frame to the supreme rank which she has assigned him among her works.

The full investigation of the principles of human beauty; and the application of them to the arts of painting and of statuary, would furnish one of the most pleasing speculations which the science of taste can afford. I am necessarily restrained to a more humble inquiry; and must confine myself to the examination of a single question. Whether the beauty of the human species is to be ascribed to any law of our nature, by which certain appearances in the countenance and form are originally, and independently, beautiful or sublime? or whether, as in the case of inanimate matter, it is to be ascribed to the various pleasing or interesting expressions we connect with such appearances?

In entering upon this investigation, it is impossible not to observe, that if the human frame is, of all material objects, that in which the greatest degree of beauty is found, it is also the object with which we have the most numerous, and the most interesting associations. The greatest beauty of inanimate matter arises from some resemblances we discover between particular qualities of it, and certain qualities or dispositions of mind: but the effect which such resemblance or analogies can produce, is feeble, in comparison of that which is produced by the immediate expression of such qualities or dispositions in the human frame. Such resemblances also are few, as well as distant; but to the expressions of the human frame there are no other limits than those that are imposed to the intellectual or moral powers of man.

That a great part of the beauty of the human countenance and form arises from such expressions, is, accordingly, very generally acknowledged. It is not, however, supposed, that the whole beauty of the countenance and form is to be ascribed to this cause; and the term expression is very generally used to distinguish that species of beauty which arises from the direct expression of mind, from that which is supposed to consist in certain visible appearances in the countenance and form. I shall endeavour now to show, that the same principle of expression is also the foundation of all the beauty or sublimity that is supposed to consist in certain visible appearances in the countenance

and form, and that the whole beauty or sublimity which is to be found in the external frame of man, is to be ascribed to the various pleasing or interesting qualities, which are either directly or indirectly expressed to us by such appearances.

All that is beautiful or sublime in the human frame, may perhaps be included in the following enumeration.

1. In the countenance. 2. In the form. 3. In attitude. And, 4. In gesture.

For the sake of perspicuity, I am under the necessity of considering these subjects separately.

SEC. II.—OF THE HUMAN COUNTENANCE.—The beauty or sublimity of the human countenance arises from three sources. First, from its colours; secondly, from the forms of the features; and, thirdly, from the composition of these colours and features.

PART I.—OF THE COLOURS OF THE COUNTENANCE.—There are two distinct species of colour in the human countenance which produce the emotion of beauty or sublimity. First, the permanent, and, secondly, the variable colours of the countenance. The first are the general and characteristic colours of the countenance, the peculiarity of its complexion, the colour of the eyes, the lips, the hair, the beard, &c. The second are those colours which are produced by particular or temporary affections of mind, as the blush of modesty, the paleness of fear, the glow of indignation, the vivid light which animates the eye of joy, or the dark cloud which seems to hang over the eye of melancholy and grief, &c.

With both of these species of colours, I think it will be acknowledged that we have distinct and important associations.

OF THE PERMANENT COLOURS.—1. Such colours have expression to us simply as colours, and upon the same principles which have formerly been stated. (Essay II. chap. iii. sect. 2.) It is thus that the pure white of the countenance is expressive to us, according to its different degrees, of purity, fineness, gaiety. The dark complexion, on the other hand, is expressive to us of melancholy, gloom, or sadness. Clear and uniform colours are significant of perfection and consistency. Mixed or mottled complexions, of confusion and imperfection. In the colour of the eyes, blue, according to its different degrees, is expressive of softness, gentleness, cheerfulness, or serenity; black, of thought, or gravity, or of sadness. A bright or brilliant eye is significant of happiness, vivacity, and gaiety; a dim and turbid eye, on the contrary, of confusion, imperfection, or melancholy. The reality of such associations is too well evinced by common experience and common language, to need any further illustration.

2. Certain colours in the countenance are expressive to us of youth or of age, of health or of disease; and convey to us all the emotions which we thus understand them to express. There is no child who does not distinguish between the bloom of youth, and the paleness of old age; who does not understand the difference between the brilliant eye of health, and the languid eye of disease; and who has not therefore acquired associations which are to govern his future life, and to make these permanent signs of the accidents of the human frame, significant to him of the state or condition they express.

3. It is yet further to be observed, that certain colours in the permanent complexion, are expressive (and very powerfully expressive to us) of peculiar characters or dispositions of mind. In this respect all men are physiognomists. The opinions we form, at first sight, of the character of strangers, the language of the young, and the loose opinions we hear every day in the world, are all significant to us of some propensity to judgment from these external signs: and when we investigate the foundation of these judgments, we shall find them chiefly to be rested upon the associations we have connected with the colours of the countenance.

The complexion, in this view, admits of four principle variations. It is either dark or fair, or pale or blooming. Each of these has established expressions to us. Dark complexions are expressive of strength, of gravity, and melancholy; fair complexions of cheerfulness, feebleness, and delicacy. The complexion, in the same manner, when pale, is expressive of gentleness, tenderness, and debility; when blooming, of gaiety, and vigour, and animation.

It is in the same manner that the eyes admit of four principal varieties of permanent colours, which are accompanied with as many different expressions. They are either black or blue, brilliant or languid. Black eyes are expressive to us of thoughtfulness, seriousness, melancholy; blue eyes, on the contrary, of softness, serenity, or cheerfulness. Brilliant eyes are expressive of joy, vivacity, penetration; languid eyes, on the contrary, of mildness, sensibility, or sorrow. The different compositions of such colours in the eyes, or in the complexion, produces a correspondent variety or diversity of expression.

Whatever may be the foundation of such association, there seems to be no doubt of their reality; and a day scarcely passes in which, either in our own experience, or in the language of conversation around us, we may not be sensible of their existence. There seems, however, to be a sufficient foundation for some associations of this kind, in our opinion of the permanent connection of certain qualities of mind, with certain external appearances of colour in the human countenance. The two great varieties of complexion, the fair and the dark, are, in fact, very generally found to be connected with the

opposite characters of cheerfulness and of melancholy; and so far is this from being a fanciful relation, that it is generally admitted by those who have the best opportunities of ascertaining it, the professors of medical science. The foundation of our association of paleness of complexion with delicacy and debility, and of bloom with vigour and animation, seems to be equally solid, as these colours are in general the signs of health, or of indisposition, and as commonly united with such qualities of body and such dispositions of mind as they generally produce. The expression of colour in the eyes seems to arise from two different sources. Black eyes are commonly united with the dark, and blue eyes with the fair complexion. They have, therefore, the different expressions of these different complexions. With respect to the brilliancy or languor of the eye, on the other hand, we have often reason to observe, that all joyful or animating affections, and all vigorous exertions of mind, give lustre and brilliancy; and that all sorrowful, or dispiriting, or pathetic emotions, give softness and languor to the colours of the eye. Such appearances, therefore, are early and strongly associated with the qualities of mind with which they have so generally been found to be accompanied, and are naturally regarded as the signs of these qualities.

II.—The expression of the *variable* colours of the countenance is still more distinct and precise. That the affections and passions o the human mind have correspondent appearances in the colours of the countenance, is a fact which all men understand, and have understood from infancy. There is no man who does not distinguish between the blush of modesty and the glow of indignation; the paleness of fear and the lividness of envy; the sparkling eye of joy and the piercing eye of rage; the dim and languid eye of grief and the open and passive eye of astonishment, &c. These appearances are so uniform in the human countenance, and are so strongly associated with their correspondent affections of mind, that even the first period of infancy is sufficient to establish the connection. It seems to me, therefore, altogether unnecessary to illustrate further the reality of these associations.

I have thus very shortly stated some of the associations we have with the colours of the human countenance, or some of the characters or dispositions of mind of which they are expressive to us. It remains for me now to show, that such colours owe their beauty or sublimity to this cause; and that, when these expressions are withdrawn, or no longer accompany them, our sentiment of beauty or sublimity is withdrawn along with them.

The beauty of colours, in this instance, must obviously arise from one or other of these three sources—

Either, first, from some original beauty in these colours themselves.

Secondly, from some law of our nature, by which the appearance of

such colours in the countenance is fitted immediately and permanently to produce the emotion of beauty; or,

Thirdly, from their being significant to us of certain qualities capable of producing pleasing or interesting emotion.

1. That such colours are not beautiful *simply as colours, or as objects of sensation*, has been already sufficiently shown in the former chapter of colours.

2. That we have no reason to suppose any law of our nature, by which certain colours in the human countenance are immediately and permanently beautiful, may perhaps be obvious from the following considerations.

1. If there were any such law of our nature, it would be obvious (like every other) in infancy. The child would mark its love or admiration according to the complexion or colours of the countenances of those who surrounded it: and its aversion would be shown to all who varied from these sole and central colours of beauty. The reverse of this is so much the case, that every one must have remarked it. For the first years of life, no sense of beauty among individuals, in this respect, is testified by children. The countenances of the old, on the contrary, with all their loss of colouring, are more delightful to them, than those of youth and infancy; and if there are any colours that appear to them as peculiarly beautiful, it is the pale countenance of the mother, in whose looks they read her affection, or the faded complexion of the aged nurse, for whose looks they mingle love with reverence.

2. If there were any such law of beauty, our opinions of such a kind would be permanent. One central colour in every feature or portion of the countenance, would alone be beautiful, and every deviation from it would be felt as a deviation from this original and prescribed beauty. How much the reverse of all this is true, every man must have felt from his own experience. In countenances of different character, we look for different tones of complexion, and different degrees of colour. In different individuals we admire not only different, but opposite colours of eyes, of hair, of complexion; and, what is still more, in the same individual, we admire, at different times, very different appearances of the same colours, on the same complexion. Such facts are altogether irreconcileable with the belief of any sole or central colour, which alone is beautiful.

3. If there were any such law of the beauty of colours, it would, like all the other laws of our nature, be universal; and all nations would have agreed in some certain colours of the human countenance, which alone were beautiful. How far this is from being true, and how much, on the contrary, every nation has its own national and peculiar sense of beauty in this respect, it would be very unnecessary to attempt to illustrate.

The remaining supposition is, that the beauty of colours in the

human countenance is derived from their being significant to us of certain qualities, capable of producing pleasing or interesting emotion.

That this is the case, and that the common sentiments of mankind are governed by this principle, may, I trust, appear from the following simple illustrations.

I.—The same colour which is beautiful in one countenance is not beautiful in another; whereas if there were any law of nature, by which certain colours were permanently beautiful, these colours alone would be beautiful in every case. Of the truth of the fact which I have stated, no person can be ignorant. The colours which we admire in childhood are unsuitable to youth; those which we admire in youth, are as unsuitable to manhood; and both are different from those which we expect, and which we love in age. Reverse the order; give to age the colours of manhood, to manhood those of youth, or to youth those of childhood: and while the colours are the same, every eye would discover, that there was something unnatural in their appearance, and that they were significant of very different expressions, from those which we were in the habit of connecting with them.

The distinction of the sexes, and the very different expectations we form from them, afford another illustration. If any certain colours are instinctively beautiful in the human countenance, they must be equally beautiful in every countenance. Yet there is no one who does not expect a very different degree, at least of colour, in the two sexes; and who does not find, that the same colour which is beautiful in the one, as expressive of the character he expects, is positively painful and disagreeable in the other. The dark red or the firm brown of complexion, so significant to us, in man, of energy and vigour, would be simply painful to us in the complexion of woman; while the pearly white, and the evanescent bloom which expresses to us so well all the gentleness, and all the delicacy of the female character, would be painful or disgusting to us in the complexion of man.

The same observation may be extended to all the professions of human life. In the shepherd and in the warrior, in the sage and in the citizen, in the tyrant and in the martyr, we imagine, and we expect very different colours of complexion. To these expectations, the painter and the poet have always instinctively yielded; and, in the imagination of colour, have not less exhibited their powers, than in the conception of feature, and in the disposal of attitude or gesture. Every colour of the human countenance we feel to be beautiful only when it corresponds to the character which is presented to us; and every colour, on the contrary, which is contradictory to the character that is meant to be expressed, we feel as imperfect or displeasing. Such feelings or conclusions, it is obvious, could never occur, if there were any certain or precise colours of the human countenance which were beautiful by some previous law of nature.

II.—The most different, and even opposite colours are felt as beautiful, when they are significant to us of pleasing or of interesting qualities in the countenances to which they belong.

There is nothing more opposite in point of colouring, than the bloom of youth to the paleness of old age yet both we know are beautiful. We love the dazzling white of complexion of the infant in its cradle. We love afterwards the firm brown colour which distinguishes the young adventurer in exercise or arms. In the recluse student, we expect the pale complexion, which signifies watching, and midnight meditation. In the soldier and sailor we look for a complexion hardened to climate, and embrowned with honourable toil. In all the variety of classes into which society has distributed mankind, we look for, in the same manner, some distinct colouring as significant of this classification. We meet with it in the descriptions of the poet, and the representations of the painter; and we feel our minds unsatisfied if we do not discover it in real life.

No colours can be more different than those of the eyes and of the hair. The dark and blue eye; the fair and the black hair, are not only different, but almost opposite. Yet who will pretend that they have not felt beauty in all of them? and to what principle are we to ascribe the effect, if we maintain that there are only certain colours in this respect which nature has made beautiful?

It is still further observable, that even in the same countenance the most different colours are beautiful, when they are expressive of pleasing or interesting qualities. The blush of modesty is very different from the paleness of sensibility. The glow of indignation is equally different from the pallid hue of concentrated affliction; the bloom of health and joy, from the languor of sickness and sorrow. Yet in the same person we may often witness these striking contrasts: and perhaps it would be difficult for us to say when the same countenance was most beautiful. In the colour of the eyes, the same differences are observable. The dark and brilliant eye may sometimes be veiled in dimness and distress. The softness of the blue eye may be exalted to temporary vigour and brilliancy. The manly eye of the soldier may be suffused with pity; and the timid eye of woman burn with just resentment or with dignified scorn. In all such differences of colour, we may still feel the emotion of beauty; an effect which could not possibly happen if there were any law of our nature, by which certain colours only in the human countenance were productive of this emotion.

III.—In pursuing these observations, it is still more important to observe, that our feelings of beauty in the colours of the human countenance, are so far from being precise and definite, as they would necessarily be, if they arose from any original law of our nature, that, in reality, they are altogether dependent on our moral opinions, and tha-

not only in respect to the dispositions they signify, but even in respect to the degree of these dispositions. Of this very important fact, I shall offer only a few illustrations, because every one of my readers is able to verify it to himself.

The difference of the permanent colours of the countenance is obvious to every one. Every one, however, has not observed, that the same colours have affected him with very different emotions, in different circumstances. There is a paleness of complexion which arises from grief, from sensibility, from study. There is a similar paleness which arises from envy, from guilty fear, from deep revenge. If the colour alone were beautiful, its beauty would remain in every case: but no one will say that this is true. The beauty of the colour, to us, is always dependent upon the disposition it signifies; the same colour varies in its effect with the expression, of which it is the sign; and the painter, while he spreads it upon his pallet, knows that by the same mechanical means, he can either create beauty or disgust, and make us, according to the expression which it signifies, glow with moral admiration, or thrill with moral terror.

The opposite colour of the countenance, the blooming or florid complexion is subject to the same moral criticism. It is the sign to us, in many cases, of joy, of hope, of enthusiasm; of virtuous indignation, of kind and benevolent affections. In such cases, it is to a certain degree beautiful. In other cases, it may be the sign to us of pride, of anger, of intemperate passion, of selfish arrogance. In such cases, it is not only not beautiful, but positively painful. How often are we deceived in this respect, in our first speculation upon any human countenance! and how permanently do we return to interpret the sign by the qualities we find it to signify, and to feel it either beautiful or otherwise by the nature of these qualities! The aversion which mankind have ever shown to the painting of the countenance, has thus a real foundation in nature. It is a sign which deceives, and, what is worse, which is intended to deceive. It never can harmonise with the genuine character of the countenance; it never can vary with those unexpected incidents which gives us our best insight into human character; and it never can be practised by those who have no character but that which fashion lends them, or those who wish to affect a character different from their own. The same observation may be extended to the colours of the eye. If we had no other principles of judgment than some original law of our nature, certain colours, or degrees of colouring, would alone be permanently beautiful. How little this is the case; how much we appreciate the language of the eye, on the contrary, and how strikingly its beauty is determined by the emotions or passions it signifies, I leave very securely to my readers to verify by their own experience.

In the variable colours of the countenance, or those which arise

from present or transitory feelings, the same fact is easily discernible. No things, in point of colouring, are so analogous as the blush of modesty, and that of conscious guilt; yet, when we know the emotions they signify, is their effect the same? The paleness of fear is beautiful, because it is ever interesting, in the female countenance. Tell us, that it arises from some trivial or absurd cause, and it becomes immediately ridiculous. There is a colour of indignation or of scorn, which may accord with the most heroic beauty. Say to us, that it arises from some childish source of etiquette or precedence, and our sentiment of beauty is instantly converted into disgust. There is a softness and languor both in the light and in the motion of the eye, which we never see without deep interest, when we consider it as expressive of general sensibility, or of occasional sorrow. Tell us, that it is affectation, that it is the manner of the ill-judging fair one who has adopted it, and, instead of interest, we feel nothing but contempt. Illustrations of this kind might be easily extended to every emotion or passion of the human mind. I leave them to the prosecution of my readers; and I flatter myself, they will see that such varieties in our sense of beauty could never exist, if there were any certain and definite colours in the human countenance, which alone were originally and permanently beautiful.

PART II.—OF THE FEATURES OF THE HUMAN COUNTENANCE.—There is a similar division of the features of the countenance of men, as of its colours, into what may be called (though with some restriction) the permanent and the variable. The permanent features are such as give the individual distinction, or form the peculiar character of the countenance in moments of tranquillity and repose. Such are the peculiar form of the head, the proportion of the face, the forms of the forehead, eyebrows, nose, cheeks, mouth, and chin, with their relation to the forms of the neck, shoulders, &c. The variable features are such forms of the permanent features, as are assumed under the influence of occasional or temporary passions, as the contracted brow of anger, the elevated eyebrow of surprise, the closed eyelids of mirth, the open eye of astonishment, the raised lip of cheerfulness, the depressed lip of sorrow, &c.

With both of these appearances, I apprehend that we have distinct and powerful associations; or, in other words, that they are expressive to us, either directly or indirectly, of qualities of mind capable of producing emotion.

1. Such forms in the countenance, have expression to us simply as forms, and are beautiful upon the same principles, as I have endeavoured to illustrate. Independent of all direct expression, small, smooth, and well-outlined features, are expressive of delicacy or fineness. Harsh and prominent features, with a coarse and imperfect

outline, of imperfection, roughness, and coarseness. The union of the features (perhaps the most important of all physical observations), admits, in the same manner, either of a flowing and undulating outline, or of harsh and angular conjunction. The first is ever expressive to us of ease, freedom, and of fineness; the second of stillness, of constraint, and of imperfection. These indirect expressions prevail, not indeed over the more direct expressions which intimacy or knowledge gives. But, that they govern us in some degree with regard to those who are strangers to us; that we are disposed to attribute to the character of those who are unknown to us, the character which their physical features exhibit; and that, even with regard to those we love most, we are sometimes apt to lament that the form of their features is so little expressive of their character, are facts which every one knows, and which need not be illustrated.

2. Such forms of features are, in general, directly expressive to us of particular characters or dispositions of mind. That certain appearances, or conformations of the features of the human countenance, are significant of certain qualities or distinctions of mind, is a fact which every child knows, even in its nurse's arms, and which, whether it arises from any original instinct, or from experience, is yet sufficient to establish a natural language, long before any artificial language is formed or understood. There are probably three sources from which these associations arise: first, the expression of physical form, which I have just stated; secondly, experience of the uniform connection of such appearances with certain characters or dispositions of the human mind; a fact of which no evidence can be greater than that of the distinction which the infant makes between the countenance of children, of women, and of men; and, thirdly, the observation of the influence which habitual passions have upon the permanent conformation of the features, and the consequent belief that the sign indicates the disposition usually signified.

Of the variable features it is unnecessary to enter into any explanation. That the human countenance possesses a degree of expression, in this respect, beyond every other animated being; that, in its genuine state, it is the mirror of whatever passes in the mind; and that all that is great or lovely in human character may there be read, even by the material eye—are truths which every one knows, and upon which the painter, the sculptor, and the poet, have formed the most exquisite productions of their arts. I cannot therefore fatigue my readers with any enumeration of these effects which all have known, and all must have felt.

That the beauty or sublimity of the forms which occur to us in the features of the human countenance, arises from such expressions alone, and not from any original beauty in such forms themselves, may perhaps be evident from the following illustrations.

1. If there were any original beauty in peculiar forms of this kind, altogether independent of the expressions of mind we associate with them, it would necessarily follow, that the *same* forms of features would be permanently beautiful, and that every form that deviated from this original and prescribed form would, in the same degree, deviate from the form of beauty.

The slightest experience is, I apprehend, sufficient to show the falsehood of this opinion. It is impossible to conceive a greater difference than takes place in the same being, in the form and construction and proportion of features, than that which uniformly takes place in the progress of man from infancy to old age. In this progress there is not a single feature which is not changed in form, in size, or in proportion to the rest: yet, in all these, we not only discover beauty, but, what is more important, we discover it at different ages, in forms different, if not opposite, from those in which we had discovered it before. The round cheek, the tumid lip, the unmarked eyebrow, &c., which are all so beautiful in infancy, yield to the muscular cheek, the firm and contracted lip, the dark and prominent eyebrow, and all the opposite forms which create the beauty of manhood. It is again the want of all this muscular power, and the new change of all the forms which it induces; the collapsed cheek, the trembling lip, the grey eyebrow, &c., which constitute the beauty of age. The poet and the painter know it: but were they, from any visionary theory, to alter these signatures of expression; were they to give to manhood the features of infancy, however beautiful, or to age those of manhood, however eloquently commented upon, is there any one who, for a moment, could look upon their representations? It is needless for me to say, that the same observation extends equally to the features that are characteristic of sex; that the form or proportion of the same features is very different in the different sexes; that even in that sex where alone they are the general objects of emotion, these forms vary with the progress of time; and that, in general, no forms of features are beautiful, but those which accord with the character we expect in the age or period of the person we contemplate.

With regard to the variable features, the proposition I have stated is get more generally observable. If there is any peculiar form of any feature which is permanently beautiful, let the inquirer state it to himself, and then let him examine the countenances of actual nature, or the representations of the painter by this standard. He will find, if I mistake not, not only that this peculiar form has no permanency of beauty, but, on the contrary, that it is often the reverse; that there is some other law that governs his opinion upon the subject; and that the most different conformations of the same features are beautiful or otherwise, according to the emotions they signify. If the smooth and open brow of youth and gaiety is instinctively beautiful, the dark and

wrinkled brow of indignation, or passion, ought to be positively displeasing: yet the experience of nature, and of the representation of the imitative arts, will show us how false would be the conclusion. If the elevated eyebrow of hope or mirth is beautiful, how shall we account for the still more powerful beauty of the contracted, and even convulsed eyebrow of fear, of horror, or of guilt? The form of the Grecian nose is said to be originally beautiful; and in many cases, and in the manner in which the artists of antiquity employed it, it is undoubtedly beautiful, because it is the conformation of that feature which best expresses the character they wished to represent. Apply, however, this beautiful form to the countenance of the warrior, the bandit, the martyr, &c., or to any countenance which is meant to express deep or powerful passion, and the most vulgar spectator would be sensible of dissatisfaction, if not of disgust. Is the mouth of youth, of hope, of rapture, beautiful? No contrast of the same feature can be so great as that of the same mouth, under the influence of grief, of age, or of melancholy. And yet the painter is able to render these conformations beautiful; and they who have lived but a little in the world, have known, that they are in fact more beautiful, than all that the same feature can receive from hope, or youth, or joy. It were unpardonable to extend these illustrations to a greater length: it is enough to lead my readers to observe for themselves, and to attend to the general truth, that, if there were any forms of features originally and permanently beautiful, these, and these only, could be beautiful in all situations; and that every form that deviated from this prescribed and central form, would necessarily be the object either of disgust or disappointment.

2. It is very easy to see, in the second place, that the most different forms of feature are actually beautiful: and that their beauty uniformly arises from the expressions of which they are significant to us. The open forehead is expressive to us of candour and generosity, and suits a countenance which has that expression. The low forehead, on the contrary, is expressive to us of thought, of gloom, or melancholy. It becomes, therefore, a different expression of countenance. The full and blooming cheek suits the countenance of youth, and mirth, and female loveliness: the sunk and faded cheek, the face of sensibility, of grief, or of penitence. The raised lip, the elevated eyebrow, the rapid motion of the eye, are all the concomitants of joyous beauty. The reverse of all these—the depressed lip, the contracted eyebrow, the slow and languid motion of the eye—are the circumstances which we expect and require in the countenances of sorrow or of sensibility. Change any of these conformations; give to the open and candid countenance the low forehead; to the face of grief, the fresh and blooming cheek of joy; to the mourner the raised lip, or the elevated eyebrow, which are expressive to us of cheerful or joyous passions;

and the picture becomes a monster, from which even then the most vulgar taste would fly, as from something unnatural and disgusting. If there were any real or original beauty in such conformations, nothing of this kind could happen: and however discordant were our emotions of beauty and of sentiment, we should still feel these conformations beautiful, just as we perceive, under all circumstances, colours to be permanently colours, or forms to be forms.

3. The slight illustrations which I have now offered, seem to me sufficient to convince those who will prosecute them, that there is no original beauty in any peculiar or distinct forms of the human features. There is another illustration which perhaps may still more strongly show the real origin of such beauty to consist in the expressions of which they are significant, viz., that the same form of feature is beautiful or not, just as it is expressive or not of qualities of mind which are amiable or interesting to us.

With regard to the permanent features, every one must have remarked, that the same form of feature which is beautiful in the one sex is not beautiful in the other; that as there is a different expression, there are different signs by which we expect them to be signified; and that, in consequence, the same signs are productive of very different emotions, when they are thus significant of improper or of unamiable expressions. They who are conversant in the productions of the fine arts, must have equally observed, that the forms and proportions of features, which the sculptor and the painter have given to their works, are very different, according to the nature of the character they represent, and the emotion they wish to excite. The form or proportions of the features of Jove are different from those of Hercules, those of Apollo from those of Ganymede, those of the Fawn from those of the Gladiator. In female beauty, the form and proportions in the features of Juno are very different from those of Venus, those of Minerva from those of Diana, those of Niobe from those of the Graces. All, however, are beautiful; because all are adapted with exquisite taste to the characters they wish the countenance to express. Let the theorist change them, and substitute for this varied and significant beauty, the forms which he chooses to consider as solely beautiful; and the experiment will very soon show, that the beauty of these forms is not original and independent, but relative and significant; and that when they cease to be expressive of the character we expect, they cease in the same moment to be beautiful.

The illustration, however, may be made still more precise; for, even in the same countenance, and in the same hour, the same form of feature may be beautiful or otherwise. Although there is an obvious distinction between the permanence of some features of the countenance, it is at the same time true, that even the permanent features are susceptible of some change of form; that they vary with the em-

ployment of the muscles which move them; and that, therefore, their permanence is rather relatively than positively true. The forehead changes in its form and dimensions with various passions. The line of the nose is varied by the elevation or depression of the muscles of the eyebrow; and its whole form is still more altered by the contraction or expansion of the nostrils. The cheeks sink or swell, as they are influenced by different emotions: and no one need be told that the mouth is so susceptible of variety of form, that from that feature alone, every one is able to interpret the emotion of the person. The same observation is applicable to the rest of the features. If there were, therefore, any original form in all these features, which was instinctively beautiful, it would allow, that, in all these changes, there was one only that was beautiful, and that all the rest would, according to their variations, be, in so far, deviations from beauty. The real fact however, is, that every one of these varieties are beautiful, when they are expressive to us of emotions of which we approve, and in which we sympathize; that none is beautiful when it has not this expression; that any feature unsusceptible of these changes, would be felt as imperfect or monstrous; and that the degree of change or variation, which is beautiful or otherwise, is always determined by its correspondence to our sentiment of the propriety or impropriety of the emotion which it signifies. The reader will find innumerable illustrations of this truth, both in his observation of common nature, and of the representations of the painter and the sculptor.

With regard to the variable features (those which are expressive of momentary or local emotion), that the beauty of their forms does not arise from their approach to any one standard, but from the nature of the expressions they signify to us, is a truth which may be easily observed in the study even of the same countenance. Nothing can be more different in point of form, than what occurs in the same face, in the muscles of the eyebrow, in the close or open conformation of the eyelids, in the contraction or dilatation of the nostrils, in the elevation or depression of the lips, in the smoothness or swelling of the muscles of the throat and neck: yet all of these are beautiful, or at least susceptible of beauty. It may have been our fortune to see all these variations of form to have taken place in the same countenance, within the space of a few hours. And if we recollect our sentiments, we shall find, that all of them were not only beautiful, when they were the genuine signs of emotions with which we sympathized: but, what is more, that they were the only forms which, in such circumstances, could have been beautiful: that their variety corresponded to the variety of emotions which the mind experienced; and that any other conformations of feature, however beautiful in other circumstances, would then have been painful or distressing. If any of my readers have not felt this in their own experience, let them attend (while it is

yet in their power) to the countenance of Mrs. Siddons, in the progress of any of her great parts of tragedy. Let them observe how the forms and proportions of every feature vary with the passions which they so faithfully express; let them mark every variety of form almost, of which the human countenance is capable, take place in the space of a few short hours; let them then ask themselves what is the common source of this infinite beauty; and although, in this examination, they will still have but a feeble sense of the excellences of this illustrious actress, they will be sensible, that there is no original or prescribed form of feature which alone is beautiful, but that every conformation is beautiful when it is expressive of the emotions which we expect and approve.

PART III.—OF THE COMPOSITION OF THE COLOURS AND FEATURES IN THE HUMAN COUNTENANCE.—The illustrations which I have given in the two former sections, relate to the beauty of the colours or features of the countenance, as single or individual objects of observation. It is very obvious, however, that all these are only parts of a whole; that some relation, at least, exists between those parts of the countenance and the countenance itself; and that there is some harmony or accordance which we expect and demand in the composition of these ingredients, before we feel that the whole is beautiful. The investigation of the principles which govern us in our sentiments of composition will, I trust, afford an additional proof of the real nature and origin of human beauty.

If there were any original and independent beauty in any peculiar colours or forms, it would then necessarily follow, that the union of these beautiful forms and colours would compose a countenance of beauty, and that every deviation in composition from these original principles of beauty would, in proportion to this deviation, affect us with sentiments either of indifference or disgust. If such were the constitution of our nature, the painter and the sculptor would possess a simple and determinate rule for the creation of beauty; the beautiful forms and colours of the human countenance would be as definite as the proportions of architecture; and the production of beauty might be as certainly attained by the artist, as arithmetical truth is by the arithmetician. That this is not the case; that the beauty of the human countenance is not governed by such definite rules; and that there are some other qualities necessary for the painter and the sculptor, than the mere observation of physical appearances, are truths with which every one is acquainted, and which therefore it would be unnecessary to attempt to illustrate.

If, on the other hand, the principles which I have before attempted to illustrate are just, if the beauty of every individual colour or form in the countenance, is determined by its expression to us of some

pleasing or interesting quality, then it ought to follow, (as in all other cases of composition), that the expression of the whole ought to regulate the beauty of the parts; that the actual beauty of these parts or ingredients, ought to depend upon their relation to the general character; and that the composition therefore should only be beautiful, when this relation of expression was justly preserved, and when no colour or feature was admitted, but what tended to the production of one harmonious and unmingled emotion.

That this is really the case; that our opinion of the beauty of the human countenance is determined by this law; and that, in every particular case, our sense of the beauty of the constituent parts is decided by their relation to the prevailing character or expression of the countenance, may perhaps be obvious from the following considerations.

I.—I have formerly endeavoured to show, that in the case of physical forms, no form was in reality beautiful to us, which was not the sign of some pleasing or interesting expression, or which, in other words, was not productive of some emotion. It is natural to think, that the same law should be preserved in the forms, &c., of the human countenance; and it is still more natural to think so, when we consider, that the expressions of the countenance are the direct expressions of mind. That the beauty, therefore, of every countenance, arises from its expression of some pleasing or interesting quality, in which our imagination loves to indulge; and that no countenance is ever felt as beautiful, where such indirect or direct expressions are not found, is a proposition (I trust) which the readers of the previous illustrations will both expect and demand. The truth of it may, perhaps, be elucidated by the following illustrations.

1. I would appeal, in the first place, to common experience. If the real beauty of the human countenance arises from the union of certain forms and colours that are originally beautiful, then every man ought to feel the sentiment of beauty in those cases alone, where those certain appearances were united. Of the truth of this proposition every man is a judge. I will presume, on the contrary, to say, that there is no man who has ever felt the sentiment of beauty, who will not acknowledge, that he has felt it in the most various and even opposite conformations of features; that he has felt, that instead of being governed by any physical law of form or colour, it has been governed by the individual circumstances of the countenance; that whenever it has been felt, it has been felt as significant of some pleasing or interesting disposition of mind; that the union of every feature and colour has been experienced as beautiful, when it was felt as expressive of amiable or interesting sentiment; and that, in fact, the only limit to the beauty of the human countenance, is the limit which separates vice from virtue; which separates the dispositions or affections we approve, from those which we disapprove or despise.

If this evidence should be insufficient, there is yet a stronger one, which arises from the usual language of mankind. We hear, every day, the admiration of beauty:—ask, then, the enthusiast to explain to you, in what this beauty consists? Did he feel that it were in any certain conformation of features, or any precise tone of colouring that beauty consists, he would tell you minutely the forms and proportions and colours of this admired countenance; and were this the law of your nature, you could feel it only by this physical description. But is it thus, in fact, that the communication is made? Is it not, on the contrary, by stating the expression which this countenance conveys to him? Are not the forms and magnitude of the features, and the tone and degree of colouring, made all subservient, in his description, to the character of mind he wishes to convey to you? And do you not feel, at the same time, that if he succeeds in persuading you of the lovely or interesting expression of the countenance, you take for granted, at once, that whatever may be the form of the features, or the nature of the colouring, the countenance itself has that simplicity and strength of expression which justifies the admiration of the person who describes it? All this, however, which may happen every day, is utterly inexplicable upon any other principle, than the foundation of beauty in expression; and the language itself would be unintelligible, if it arose only from some definite form of features, or definite appearance of colour.

The observation may be extended to the usual and habitual language of the world. There is no one who must not have observed that the description of human beauty, in common life, is always by terms significant of its expression. When we say that a countenance is noble, or magnanimous, or heroic, or gentle, or feeling, or melancholy, we convey at once to every hearer, a belief of some degree of sublimity or beauty; but no one ever asks us to describe the form of the features which compose it. When we differ, in the same manner, with regard to individual beauty, we do not support ourselves by any physical investigation of features. It is the character of the countenance we disagree in: and when we feel that this character is either unmeaning, or expressive of unpleasing dispositions, no conformation of features, and no splendour of colours, will ever render it beautiful to us. How much this is the case in society; how much the opinion of beauty is dependent upon the character of the mind which observes it; how profusely the good find beauty in every class of mankind around them; how much, on the contrary, the habits of vice tend to obliterate all the genuine beauty of nature to the vicious, must, to every man of common thought, have been the subject both of pleasing and of melancholy observation.

It is observable, in the same manner, that the most beautiful countenance is not permanently and uniformly beautiful, as it necessarily

would be, if this beauty arose from any original law of our nature; but that its beauty is always dependent upon the nature of the temporary dispositions, or qualities of mind which it signifies. Every man who has had the good fortune to live in the society of beautiful women, must often have observed, that there were many days of his life, and many hours in every day, when he was altogether insensible to their beauty. The little unmeaning and uninteresting details of domestic life; the usual cares and concerns of female duty; sometimes, perhaps, the irritations and disturbances of domestic economy, produce expressions which are neither interesting or affecting; and, while they produce these, the beauty of the countenance (however latently great) is unfelt and unobserved. Whenever the countenance assumes the expression of any amiable or interesting emotion, the beauty of it immediately returns.

While there is scarcely any countenance that thus remains beautiful under the expression of vulgar or uninteresting emotions, and none which can preserve it under the dominion of vicious or improper dispositions, it may at the same time be observed, that there are very few countenances which are not raised into beauty, by the influence of amiable or lofty expression. They, who have had the happiness to witness the effects of sudden joy or unlooked-for hope in the countenances, even of the lowest of the people—who have attended to the influence of sorrow, or sympathy, in the expression of faces unknown to affectation—they, still more, who have ever looked steadily upon the bed of sickness or of death, and have seen the influences of submission and of resignation upon every feature of the suffering or expiring countenance, can, I am persuaded, well tell, that there is scarcely any form of features which such interesting and lofty expressions cannot and do not exalt into beauty. It is on the same account, that the young who live familiarly together, are so seldom sensible to each other's beauty. The countenance, however beautiful, must often appear to them with very unmeaning and uninteresting expressions. The quiet detail of domestic life gives birth to no strong emotions in the countenances of either; they meet without animation, and they separate without tenderness; the habits of simple friendship call forth no transports of passion; and they go abroad into less known societies, to look for those agitations of hope or fear which they do not experience at home. To lovers, on the contrary, and for the same reason, every look and every feature is beautiful; because they are expressive to them of the most delightful emotions which their age can feel; because the countenance is then animated with expressions the most amiable and genuine which it ever can display; and still more, perhaps, because they are the signs to them of those imaginary scenes of future happiness, in the promise of which, youth and love are so happily profuse.

It is the same principle which is the obvious cause of the infrequency of beauty among the lower orders. Something of this is undoubtedly to be ascribed to the influence of climate, and of weather, and to the negligence of those arts, by which, in the higher ranks of life, the physical beauty, at least of feature and of complexion, is so assiduously preserved. But the principal cause of it is in the character of mind, which such situations too naturally create. They who live for subsistence, cannot live for beauty. The occupations in which they are engaged, the modes of life to which they are doomed, are little consistent with any amiable or interesting emotions; and their countenances, therefore, (however latently beautiful), express nothing to us but low care or painful occupation. In their usual hours, therefore, their beauty is scarcely more than that of youth and health; and we observe it with satisfaction rather than pleasure. Let us follow them, however, from these vulgar and degrading occupations, into the scenes of their gaiety and enjoyment—let us follow them into scenes of distress or sympathy, when finer emotions are excited, or when their countenances waken into correspondent expression—and we shall be astonished to find, that amid the most common features, beauty arises, and amid the most common forms, grace is to be found. In every country of Europe, I believe, in the same manner, the traveller has felt that the greatest beauty exists among women of the highest rank, or in those who live in affluence or independence; and it ought to be so. They who live, not for subsistence, but for society; who, from their earliest days are unbroken by labour, or by care; who, still more, exist for their hour only in the search for admiration, are under the necessity of gaining it by every flattery to the feelings of others, by assuming virtues if they possess them not, and by counterfeiting, for the time at least, every disposition of mind, and every expression of countenance, which renders society amiable, or woman lovely.

Observations of this kind may be extended to every scene almost of our intercourse with mankind. I presume only to add the following, which perhaps every one of my readers can verify by their own experience.

Were the beauty of the human countenance dependent altogether upon certain forms or colours, it would be very difficult to account for those different beauties of age or sex, in which all men and all ages have agreed. If we consider them as arising from the expression of those qualities or dispositions which we expect and love in sex and in age, we shall find no difficulty in reconciling the facts with the theory. In men and in women, every countenance is to a certain degree beautiful, which is expressive of interesting or amiable dispositions; and from the cradle to the grave, every conformation of the human countenance is in some measure beautiful, which is significant of the qualities or character of mind, which we think that age ought to display.

There is, however, a difference in this respect; and it is obviously with very different sentiments that we regard male and female beauty. The one we regard with love and admiration, the other scarcely with more than satisfaction. Of these different sentiments the account is simple. The forms of the male countenance in manhood, are not, in general, expressive of very amiable qualities, nor do we expect them. It is spirit, thought, resolution, which we look for as the predominant expressions of that age: but none of these are expressions extremely interesting to us; and all of them may be painful or exaggerated. The dispositions of mind, on the contrary, that we look for in the female countenance, are modesty, humility, timidity, sensibility, and kindness. These are dispositions which we never observe without deep emotion. They are not only delightful in themselves, but they are such as we expect in that sex; and there is no expression of them which does not affect us, both with the tenderness of love and with the sentiment of propriety. But while this is the case with the countenance of manhood, it is not the same (as every one has observed) with other periods of male existence. Infancy is equally beautiful in the one sex as in the other; and the early youth of man (before it is corrupted by the business of the world) is not unfrequently susceptible of as great a degree of beauty as is, perhaps, ever to be found in human conformation. In old age, again, the male countenance reassumes, as it were, its beauty; because the character it expresses, the disposition which it displays, and, still more, the melancholy contrast which we draw between its maturity and its decline, affect us with emotions of a far more profound and exquisite kind, than we ever experienced in the noon-day of its strength. I forbear to add to those illustrations, and I have stated them with all the brevity in my power, because I wish my readers to observe for themselves, and because I am satisfied, that they who will exert this attention will soon be convinced of the truth of the proposition.

2. While the beauty of every human countenance seems thus fundamentally to arise from the expression of some pleasing or interesting quality, I would observe, in the second place, that the composition of the countenance is dependent upon the preservation of the unity of this expression; and that our sense of the beauty of the individual colours or features, is always determined by the preservation of this relation.

There are properly three distinct species of beauty of which the human countenance is capable. First, physical beauty, or that of forms or colours, considered simply as colours or forms, and independent of any direct expression of character or emotion. Secondly, the beauty of character, or the expression of some permanent and distinctive disposition of amiableness or interest. And, thirdly, the beauty of emotion, or the expression of some temporary or immediate feeling

which we love or approve. In each of these distinct cases, I apprehend our common experience will justify us in concluding, that the beauty of the human countenance depends upon the preservation of the unity of expression; and that our opinion of the beauty of the separate colours or features, is uniformly governed by their relation to this end.

1. There are many countenances which are beautiful only as physical objects, which signify no character of mind, and of which we judge precisely in the same manner as we do of inanimate forms or colours. They are significant to us of strength or delicacy, of coarseness or fineness, of health or indisposition, of youth or of age, &c.; but they are significant of nothing more. Of countenances of this kind (whatever be their character), our sense of the beauty of every separate feature is uniformly determined by its relation to this general character; and the countenance is only wholly beautiful when this relation is preserved. Our judgments of this kind are so common and so rapid, that we very seldom examine upon what they are founded; but a very few illustrations will be sufficient to satisfy any one, that they ultimately rest upon this unity of expression. Features, small in form and fine in outline, with a complexion clear and pale, are generally expressive to us of delicacy, gentleness, fineness, &c. To such a countenance, give the addition of a Roman nose, or tumid lip, or thick and heavy eyebrows, &c., and every one feels that the beauty of the countenance is destroyed. We see that there is inconsistence in the arrangement: we lament it; and we busy ourselves in imagining the form of feature that is wanted, and which would render the whole complete.——To a countenance of manliness and vigour, in which the general form of the colours and features bear a relation to the character, add one feature of infant or of feminine beauty; a Grecian nose, a small mouth, the round cheek, or the small and regular teeth of infancy: the countenance is not only hurt, but becomes ludicrous; and yet the destructive feature is, in other cases, singularly beautiful. ——There is beauty in the smooth complexion of youth, and in the wrinkled and furrowed complexion of age; in the paleness of the delicate form, and in the high bloom of health and enjoyment; in the open front of honour and vigour, and the close and contracted brow of thought and deep reflection, &c. Yet let them be fortuitously mingled, or let the painter attempt to use them as elementary principles of beauty, and every one will feel that their beauty depends upon relation, and that this relation is that of their correspondence to the general expression of the countenance. It would be absurd to multiply illustrations upon a subject which every one expresses, almost every day of his life, in the language he uses with regard to human beauty.

2. The truth of the proposition is still more apparent in relation

to the second species of beauty, or that of character. Wherever, in actual life, we are conscious in any great degree of the influence of beauty, we shall always find that it is in the general or characteristic expression of the countenance; that the language by which we describe it to others, or by which we attempt to explain it to ourselves, is always by terms significant of this expression; that the expressions which are not interesting to us are never the foundation of beauty to us, however much they may be to others; that the degree of beauty we perceive is uniformly correspondent to the degree of this expression which we love or approve; and that this beauty is in fact either felt or unfelt, precisely as the state of our own minds induces us either to sympathize or not with the disposition of mind which the countenance displays. These are truths of which, I apprehend, every one, who has ever attended to the history of his own feelings, must immediately be conscious. If it were possible, however, to doubt, that the beauty of colour or feature in any countenance arises from their correspondence and subservience to the character of the expression, the following hints may perhaps be sufficient to satisfy it.

First, when we find fault with any feature or colour in a characteristic or expressive countenance, what is the reason of our objection, and the principle upon which we defend it in conversation? Secondly, when we meet with this want of correspondence in any beautiful countenance, do we attribute it to the absence of some positively beautiful form or colour, or to the want of harmony with the general tone and character of the countenance? Thirdly, are not the most different forms and colours of the countenance beautiful, when they are felt as the signs of just and interesting expressions; and is any form or colour, however beautiful in one circumstance, capable of being transferred to others, without affecting us with emotions very different from beauty? Fourthly, when we imagine to ourselves some countenance of unmingled beauty, does the operation of our fancy consist in bringing together single and individual colours or features which we have seen in individual cases as beautiful; or does it consist in composing them into one imaginary whole, in which every feature and colour unites in the signification of one lovely or interesting expression, and in which we see the character we love, unmingled and unallayed by the usual discordance of vulgar features? Fifthly, when the statuary, or the painter, have executed any of those great works which the admiration of ages, is it by uniting together features or colours of individual beauty? or is it by seizing, as by inspiration, the character they wish to represent, by throwing off all the incumbrances of vulgar nature, and by bringing out the general and ideal correspondence of every line and every colour to the character he pourtrays,—and thus leaving upon the mind of the spectator, that pure and unmingled emotion which he is never destined to feel in real life? To these queries, every one is able to

answer; and I flatter myself, the answer to them will be sufficient to convince any candid mind, that the real beauty of the features of the countenance is ultimately determined by their relation to the general expression; that many which are beautiful in one case are not beautiful in others; and that their real beauty consists in their correspondence to that unity of character which we ever expect and demand in this higher species of beauty.

3. The same mode of reasoning may easily be extended to the third species of beauty, or that which arises from temporary or accidental emotion. The great object of the painter (of modern times at least), has been to represent the countenance under the dominion of such strong or sudden emotions. The beauty which is generally admired upon the stage, is that which is represented in scenes of deep interest or effect; and every one must have perceived, in common life, that, in moments of such a kind, the influence of beauty has been felt in a very different degree from what it is in the tranquil scenes of our ordinary life.

Every one, perhaps, has formed to himself some general conception of the beauty of the human countenance, under the influence of innocence, gaiety, hope, joy, rapture,—or under the dominion of sensibility, melancholy, grief, or terror, &c. If he attends to the nature of this operation of fancy, he will find that the principle which governs this ideal composition is that of unity of expression; that he admits into this sketch no feature or colour which does not correspond with the character which interests him; and that he is at last only satisfied when he has formed the conception of one uniform and harmonious whole. If we look to our actual experience, we shall find, in the same manner, that the same obstacles occur as in the case of characteristic beauty which I have just mentioned; that few countenances possess this opulence of expression; that some unmeaning feature either checks, or some contradictory feature destroys, the unity of the expression; and that, when we wish to feel it in reflection, we are under the necessity of throwing out the discordant feature, and composing a new and more harmonious combination.

Of the many circumstances of common observation which are evidences of this truth, I limit myself to the mention of a very few.

Whenever the countenance has any distinguished character, it is seldom susceptible of beauty, when under the dominion of opposite or unanalogous emotions. In countenances of deep melancholy, laughter is painful. In those of extreme gaiety, melancholy is not less so. Dignified features are disgraced by mirth, and mirthful features made ridiculous by the assumption of dignity. Nothing is more distressing than for the manly countenance to affect the look of softness or effeminacy; and nothing more absurd than for the effeminate countenance to affect the expression of manliness. Such observations are

in the power of every one; and I believe it will universally be found, that whenever the countenance possesses any characteristic species of beauty, no emotion is ever beautiful in it, but such as accords with this predominant expression.

It is on the same account that our experience of the different dispositions that become the different ages of life, govern, in so great a degree, our opinion of the beauty of the countenance in those different ages. We expect mirth and joy in infancy; firmness and vigour in manhood; gravity and serenity in old age. Nothing is more painful to us than the confusion or alteration of these expressions. Gravity in youthful features; or the heedless mirth of infancy in the features of maturity; or the passionate joy of youth in the features of old age, are expressions which we never observe without censure or disgust; and which, however beautiful in other cases, are in these painful and revolting. It is hence, too, very obvious, that there arises a certain propriety or decency which we expect in men of different professions; and that the expressions of countenance which we feel as beautiful or appropriate in one character, we feel as very different in others. The fearless and gallant look which we love in the sailor and the soldier, we should disapprove in the countenance of a judge, and still more, in that of a minister of religion. The gravity and sober thought which we expect in the looks of these, we should again disapprove in the courtier or the man of the world. We expect a different expression in the countenance of the great merchant and the little shopkeeper, in the landlord and the farmer, in the teacher of science and in the disciple. Each of these may be appropriate, and so far beautiful; but we feel them only as beautiful in their proper cases, or when they correspond to that general character of expression which we expect in such cases. I forbear to allude to the expressions of the female countenance; to the peculiar emotions which are beautiful in it, which do not extend to the other sex; to the degree of emotion which we expect in it, in comparison with that of men; and to the painful sentiments we feel, when female features assume the expression of man, or those of men assume that of woman, because they are within the reach of every person's observation.

3. The illustrations which I have offered of the truth of the general proposition, 'That the beauty of colours or features in the human countenance, is estimated by their harmony or correspondence with the general expression, and from no original or positive beauty in themselves,' has been supported by that reference to common fact and common experience, of which every reader can judge. There is another argument, which arises from our consciousness—in which, perhaps, some of my readers may find a deeper interest.

If there were any original beauty in certain colours or forms of the human countenance, or if the human mind were adapted to experience

the emotion of beauty only from such forms or colours, it would then inevitably follow, as in the case of every other sense, that one single and individual sentiment of pleasure would be felt upon such appearances; that the emotion of beauty would be a simple and unassociated sentiment; and that language everywhere would have conveyed it with the same unity and accuracy, as it does the sentiments of right or wrong, of justice or injustice.

If, on the contrary, our sense of the beauty of such forms or colours, is dependent upon their relation to a general expression; if our sentiment of their beauty varies with that relation; and if the same forms and colours that are beautiful in one case are not beautiful in others; then it ought to follow, that our consciousness and our language (as expressive of that consciousness) should vary with the different circumstances of composition; that instead of one peculiar emotion of beauty, we should experience as many different emotions of beauty as the qualities of the human mind can excite; that the countenance of each sex, and of every age, should be susceptible of beauty wherever the composition of its features, &c., corresponded with the character we expected and wished; and that no countenance should be felt, or be expressed by us, as beautiful, but when the conformation of the various features and colours corresponded with the characteristic, or temporary character, which we wished and expected under the circumstances in which we perceived them.

Which of these two theories is the most just, or the most correspondent to our plain and common experience, I willingly leave to my readers to determine.

From the illustrations I have offered in this chapter, with regard to the origin of the beauty of the human countenance, there are some general conclusions which seem to follow, which it may not be unuseful to the observers of nature to attend to; and to the artists who are engaged in the representation of beautiful nature to remember.

I.—There seem to be three distinct sources of the beauty or sublimity of the countenance of man.

First. From physical beauty, or the beauty of certain colours and forms, considered simply as forms or colours.

Secondly. From the beauty of expression and character; or that habitual form of features and colour of complexion, which, from experience, we consider as significant of those habitual dispositions of the human mind, which we love, or approve, or admire.

Thirdly. From the beauty of emotion; or the expression of certain local or temporary affections of mind, which we approve, or love, or admire.

II. Each of these species of beauty will be perfect, when the composition of the countenance is such as to preserve, pure and unmingled, the expression which it predominantly conveys; and when no feature

or colour is admitted, but which is subservient to the unity of this expression.

III.—The last or highest degree of beauty or sublimity of the human countenance, will alone be attained when all these expressions are united; when the physical beauty corresponds to the characterstic; when the beauty of temporary emotion harmonizes with the beauty of character; and when all fall upon the heart of the spectator as one whole, in which matter, in all its most exquisite forms, is only felt as the sign of one great or amiable character of mind.

SEC. III.—OF THE BEAUTY AND SUBLIMITY OF THE HUMAN FORM.—The same principle which leads us to ascribe the beauty of inanimate forms to some one original and independent configuration of beautiful form, has a tendency to mislead us with regard to the beauty of the human form. In some species of form we perceive beauty; in others, we perceive none. Of so uniform an effect we believe there must be an equally uniform cause; and as the apparent cause is in the nature and circumstances of the material form, we very naturally satisfy the indolence of inquiry, by supposing that there must be some one appearance or character of this material form which is originally beautiful; and that, of consequence, the absence of beauty arises, in any case, from the absence of this peculiar and gifted form. Such is the first and most natural theory of mankind. It is that which we universally find among the lower ranks of men; and which, though it does not satisfy them, perhaps, in any individual case to which they give their attention, is yet sufficient to give them something like a general principle, which, while it has the appearance of truth, has still more the great convenience of theory, that of saving them from the labour of further investigation. Of this popular and infant theory, it is needless for me to enter into any investigation. It is always abandoned as soon as men are capable of observation; when they are able to perceive, that there is in fact no such supposed form of original beauty; and when they begin to feel, from their own experience, that the sentiment of beauty is felt from many different and even opposite appearances of human form.

From this early hypothesis, the next step has uniformly been to the imagination of some original beauty in certain proportions of the human form. The belief that there is one central and sacred form which alone is beautiful, must be abandoned as soon as men are capable of observation. But the natural prejudice to refer the cause of this emotion to the material qualities alone which excite it, is not so soon abandoned; and as these are susceptible of measurement and precision, there is an obvious motive given, both to the philosopher and the artist, to establish a correspondent precision in the system of the one, and the productions of the other.

The human form is composed of different parts. In the natural or in the imitated form, there are some relations or proportions of these parts, which are everywhere felt as beautiful. It is natural therefore to conclude, that the adoption of such measures or proportions will always secure the production of the same effect. It seems hence naturally to follow, that the latent beauty of form arises from these peculiar proportions; and that if these proportions were precisely ascertained, there would be a certain rule given, by which the production of beauty, in this respect, would infallibly be attained. Artists, accordingly, in every age, have taken pains to ascertain the most exact measurements of the human form, and of all its parts. They have imagined also various standards of this measurement; and many disputes have arisen, whether the length of the head, of the foot, or of the nose, was to be considered as this central and sacred standard. Of such questions, and such disputes, it is not possible to speak with seriousness, when they occur in the present times. But it ought at the same time to be remembered, that this theory, however imperfect, was yet a step (and indeed a great one) in the progress, both of the art and of the science of taste. It supposed observation,—it animated attention; and what is more, under the name of physical proportion (as I shall afterwards show), it involved the study of higher and more genuine proportion. The artist in attending to the rude grammar of his language, learned something of its spirit and capacity; and when the progressive expansion of genius left behind it the rules and proportions of the school, the philosopher learned also to extend his induction, and to perceive that there were other principles by which his emotions were governed, and which were yet remaining for his investigation.

Of this second theory, therefore, 'that there are certain relations or proportions of the different parts of the human form, which are originally and essentially beautiful, and from the perception of which all our sentiment of beauty in this respect arises'—it is, I trust, now unnecessary for me to enter into any lengthened refutation. Yet, as some opinions of this kind yet linger among connoisseurs and men of taste; and as the anxiety for some definite rules of judgment is ever more prevalent among such men, than the desire of investigating their truth, it may not be unuseful to suggest the following very simple considerations, which every one of my intelligent readers must fully have anticipated.

1. If there were any definite proportions of the parts of the human form, which, by the constitution of our nature, were solely and essentially beautiful, it must inevitably have followed, that the beauty of these proportions must have been as positively and definitely settled as the relations of justice or of geometry. To take an original sense for granted, and, at the same time, to suppose, that the indications of

this sense are variable, or contradictory, is a solecism in reasoning which no man will venture to support. If such a sense is supposed, then the universal opinion of mankind ought to be found to agree in some precise and definite proportion of the parts of the human form. If the opinions of mankind do not agree in such certain and definite proportion, then no peculiar sense can be supposed to exist, by which these sentiments are received.

That not only the sentiments of mankind do not agree upon this subject, but that the sentiments of the same individual differ, in a most material manner, is a truth very susceptible of illustration. There is no form, perhaps, in nature, which admits of such variety, both in appearance and proportion of parts, as the body of man; and which, therefore, seems so little capable of being reduced to any definite system of proportion. The proportions of the form of the infant are different from those of youth; these again from those of manhood; and these again perhaps still more from those of old age and decay. If there were any instinctive sense of beauty in form, in this long history, there would be one age only in which this sense could be gratified. Yet every one knows, not only that each of these periods is susceptible of beautiful form, but, what is much more, that the actual beauty in every period consists in the preservation of the proportions peculiar to that period, and that these differ in every article almost from those that are beautiful in other periods of the life of the same individual. The same observation is yet still more obvious with regard to the difference of sex. In every part of the form, the proportions which are beautiful in the two sexes are different; and the application of the proportions of the one to the form of the other, is everywhere felt as painful and disgusting. If, however, there were any original and essential beauty in some definite proportion of parts, such effects could never happen. This definite proportion, in every case, would be solely beautiful; and every variation from it would affect us as a deviation or opposition to the genuine form of beauty.

It may be observed, in the same manner, that if the beauty of form consisted in any original proportion, the productions of the fine arts would everywhere have testified it; and that, in the works of the statuary and the painter, we should have found only this sole and sacred system of proportion. The fact however is (as every one knows), that, in such productions, no such rule is observed; that there is no one proportion of parts which belongs to the most beautiful productions of these arts; that the proportions of the Apollo, for instance, are different from those of the Hercules, the Antinous, the Gladiator, &c.; and that there are not, in the whole catalogue of ancient statues, two perhaps, of which the proportions are actually the same. Against the hypothesis of an instinctive beauty in proportion, no fact can be so decisive as this. If there were any original beauty in peculiar pro-

portions of the human form, the artists of antiquity must have perceived it, when it was so easy a matter to ascertain it, only by the labour of measurement and calculation: and, that their productions are independent of such definite proportions, and that their effect is still produced, amid all this variation of proportion, are irrefragable proofs, not only that the beauty of their works is not dependent upon such a theory of proportion, but that it arises from some higher causes, and from some more profound attention to those feelings of human nature in which the sentiment of beauty is to be found.

2. If there were any original beauty in certain proportions of the human form (independent of all other considerations), then it must necessarily follow, that the same proportions of that form would, in all cases, be beautiful, and that all other proportions would affect us with sentiments of pain or of displeasure. If such a theory were maintained, let the philosopher state with accuracy the proportions that are thus instinctively beautiful. Let him then examine whether this doctrine corresponds with the most obvious facts in nature. The various ages of man are, in some cases, and in all cases may be made, beautiful, by the genius of the painter or the statuary. Are the rules of proportion applicable to all these cases? and do we admire the form of the child, the youth, the man, and the aged man, because they retain, amid all their changes, the same proportions? Is the beauty of the female form demonstrable only because it contains the same proportions with that of man? and is every thing that deviates from the male proportion, a blemish and a deviation from beauty in the female? These are obvious considerations: the pursuit of them, however, will lead every one that is capable of observation, to still more satisfactory conclusions. If it is still further supposed, in aid of this infant theory, that there are certain proportions in sex, and in the various ages of human life, which are originally beautiful, it will not easily be supposed or maintained, that there are similar instincts correspondent to the casual occupations of mankind; and that in every age in the progress of society, and in every society into which civilized man is formed, new or accidental instincts must be given, by which alone he can perceive the beauty of the forms around him. Yet all this must be supposed, before, upon these principles, it is possible to account for the sentiments we every day feel, and for the illustrations which the artist every day gives us, with regard to the beauty of proportion. We see every day, around us, some forms of our species which affect us with sentiments of beauty. In our own sex, we see the forms of the legislator, the man of rank, the general, the man of science, the private soldier, the sailor, the labourer, the beggar, &c. In the other sex, we see the forms of the matron, the widow, the young woman, the nurse, the domestic servant, &c. Is it by the principle of proportion alone, that in all these cases our sentiment of

beauty is determined? Are the proportions the same in all these cases? Is not in fact our sentiment of beauty determined by the difference of these proportions; and would not the application of the same principles to each, destroy altogether the characteristic beauty which we expect and look for in such different cases? It is obviously the same in the arts of imitation. We expect different proportions of form from the painter, in his representation of a warrior and of a shepherd, of a senator and of a peasant, of a wrestler and of a boatman, of a savage, and of a man of cultivated manners. We expect, in the same manner, from the statuary, very different proportions in the forms of Jove and of Apollo, of Hercules and of Antinous, of a Grace and of Andromache, of a Bacchanal and of Minerva, &c. It is of no consequence, at present, why we expect all this, and why the greatest artists have so faithfully fulfilled this expectation. It is only of consequence to observe, that all this could not happen if there were any sole and original beauty in certain proportions alone; and that, if this had been the case, neither could we have formed the expectation, nor could the artist have dared to obey it, by deviating from the sole and established principle of beauty. The further prosecution of this illustration I leave very willingly to the reader.

If the beauty, then, of the human form does not arise from any certain proportions which are solely and essentially beautiful, we must look for the source of it in those expressions, of which (like every other material form) it may be significant to us.

There are two principal classes of expression, which the human form seems to me to have to us, and which I shall consider separately, as they are the foundation of very different kinds of beauty, and have not, perhaps, been so accurately distinguished as they deserve.

I.—The first of these expressions is that of fitness for the end for which the form was designed. The human body is a machine fitted for many and important ends; every member of it, in the same manner, has distinct employments, and may be either well or ill formed for these ends. The knowledge of this fitness in the whole form, or in the various parts of it, we learn from our own experience, and from our continual observation of others; and the appearance of every form immediately suggests to us the ideas either of fitness or unfitness for these ends. That the appearance of fitness, in this respect, is pleasing and satisfactory to us; and that the appearance, on the contrary, of any unfitness, either in the general form or in any of its members, is painful and unsatisfactory to us, are propositions which need no illustration. Our opinions upon the subject are perhaps very seldom either accurate or scientific; and the standard by which we judge, is, in general, perhaps, only the common or average form. But that we have all some standard of judgment on this subject, and that we actually feel this sentiment, either of fitness or unfitness, in observ-

ing the forms of those around us, the experience of every day may convince us.

It is this expression of fitness which is, I apprehend, the source of the beauty of what is strictly and properly called proportion in the parts of the human form. The considerations which lead me to this opinion are the following.

First. From language. The terms of proportion and of fitness are convertible. If we describe to any person the circumstances of a form perfectly fitted for the animal ends of men, we give him immediately the idea of its proportion. If we describe a form in any respect unfitted for these ends, we give him immediately, in the same manner, the conception of disproportion. If, on the other hand, we describe a form, or a part of the form, as well or ill-proportioned, we immediately convey the idea either of the fitness or unfitness of the form, &c. Such circumstances could not occur, if our sentiments on these subjects arose from different causes.

Secondly. Our sensibility to the beauty of proportion is limited by our knowledge of this fitness. Children, it may always be observed, though sensible to the beauty of forms from other causes, are very late of being sensible to the beauty of proportion, obviously because they have not yet acquired the knowledge upon which the sense of this relation is founded. Every one may have observed, in the same manner, that women are very imperfect judges of the beauties of proportion in the male figure, and that their sentiments of beauty are formed upon very different principles; because they are naturally unacquainted, from their own experience, with the various ends to which this fine machine is so wonderfully adapted; and while they remain ignorant of them, they want that sense of fitness upon which the sentiment of proportion is founded. The common professions of society demand the exertion of certain members of the body, in preference to the rest; and each has the tendency, therefore, to give peculiar strength and amplitude to these peculiar members. Such appearances of the human form are perhaps unpleasing to the general spectator, as deviations from the common forms. But to those who consider them in the view of the ends which they serve, they not only acquire the beauty of proportion, but the form would appear to them imperfect and unsatisfactory without these appearances. Every one expects a different conformation of members in the soldier, the sailor, the waterman, the shepherd, the huntsman, the ploughman, &c.; and every painter accommodates himself to this expectation. If we ask what is the cause of this difference of our expectation, we shall find it to be our previous knowledge of the purposes which they serve; that the conformation which is suited to the end, has always to us the beauty of proportion; and that, when we assign our reason for our approbation, the reason is always that of fitness for the occupation of

the person. When we are ignorant of this end, we never fail to feel the conformation unpleasing.

Thirdly. When the opinion of fitness varies, the sense of proportion uniformly varies with it. The most striking illustration of this proposition is in the sentiments we feel with regard to the form and proportions of the sexes. Nothing is more pleasing or satisfactory to us, than the full proportions of the male form, when every member of the form is significant to us of the vigour and energy for which we know it was designed. The same proportions in the female form are both painful and unsatisfactory. Nothing, in the same manner, that form can exhibit, is so beautiful as the genuine proportions of the female form; yet nothing is so positively painful, and even shocking, as the appearance of such proportions in the form of man. We may trace the influence of the same opinion, in our judgments of the proportions which are pleasing to us in the progress of the individual form, from infancy to manhood. In the age of infancy, we look for health, and happiness, and vivacity; but not for energy or strength. The pleasing proportions of that age are, therefore, those only which are conducive to those ends; and the appearance of premature strength or energy, always affects us with a sense of something unnatural and monstrous. In the form of youth, we look for vivacity, agility, speed, and all the incipient marks of muscular power; but we do not look for the traces of confirmed strength, or habitual exertion. It is in manhood only, that we expect the full evolution of the members of the human form; and that we learn those general maxims of proportion, which not only guide our opinion of the form in that age, but which, in some measure, guide also our opinions of the different forms of the same individual in earlier ages, as the signs or indications of the promised and mature form. In these different stages of human life, it is obvious that the proportions of the same form are very different; and it is equally obvious, that they are pleasing only when they are accommodated to the ends which we conceive to belong to these different periods.

We are conscious of the same effect in the opinions we form of the proportions of the human body, in the various business and occupations of life; and the most different conformations are pleasing to us when they are significant of their fitness to these occupations. We expect a different form, and a different conformation of limbs, in a running-footman and a waterman, in a wrestler and a racing-groom, in a shepherd and a sailor, &c. If, with the idle and ineffectual labour of the connoisseur, we should measure the proportions of the Fawn and the Gladiator, the Hercules and the Antinous, the Jupiter and the Apollo, we should find that not only the proportions of the form, but those of every limb were different; and that the pleasure we feel in these proportions arises from their exquisite fitness for the

physical ends which the artists were consulting, and not from any original or definite conformations, which alone are pleasing, independent of any such fitness. Even the most unobserving of mankind are yet conscious of the influence of this opinion; and we have only to attend to the common language of conversation to perceive, that men, in general, judge of the propriety of every form by its suitableness to the profession, or age or occupation of the person; and that some sentiment of dissatisfaction is always expressed, when this fitness or suitableness does not appear in the peculiar form or configuration.

Fourthly. I would observe, in the last place, that the sentiment of pleasure we feel from proportion in the human form is precisely similar, both in kind and degree, to that which we experience from the appearance of fitness in other subjects. The sentiment of fitness is a pleasing and satisfactory one, but it is not (in itself) a sentiment of much effect or enthusiasm. We are pleased, but not transported: it satisfies the understanding, but it has little effect upon the imagination. The sentiment we experience from the observation of proportion in this subject is precisely similar. The just or expedient conformation of the human form, or any of its members, to their ends, is undoubtedly a pleasing and satisfactory observation: but it is not one, which (of itself) leads to any deeper emotion. We are more displeased with its absence, than pleased with its occurrence. If we describe to any person a form of this kind, we shall find that we give him satisfaction rather than emotion; and if we wish to give him the impression of beauty, we shall also find that we must have recourse to other principles, and suggest other images to his mind, than those of mere fitness or proportion.

If the reader has followed me in the preceding slight illustrations, he will be induced to conclude: first, that there are no original and definite proportions which alone are beautiful, by any peculiar law in the human form. Secondly, that the beauty of these proportions (whenever they are felt), is resolvable into the more general beauty of fitness. And, thirdly, that this expression of fitness, though a source of calm and satisfactory pleasure, is yet very insufficient to account for the intense and profound delight we are conscious of experiencing from the appearances of the human form.

Proportion, therefore, though necessary to the beauty or sublimity of the form of man, does not constitute it. Every one knows that forms may be perfectly proportioned, and yet not be beautiful. In its proper and restricted sense, it is the just relation of animal members to the ends of an animal frame; and it is a term, therefore, equally applicable to the forms of animals as to those of man. In so far as it influences our minds, it is a source rather of negative than of positive beauty: without it, beauty cannot exist, but it does not exist in it alone;

and to account, therefore, for the effects we feel from the appearances of the human form, we must look for other causes, and higher principles.

II.—The second class of expressions which the form of man has to us, is that of character, or of some amiable or interesting quality of mind. When we consider the form only as an animal frame, we determine its beauty only by its fitness for the ends of animal existence; when we consider it as the habitation of mind, we perceive it to be significant, in every member, of the disposition or the character of that mind.

That such expressions exist; or that the human form is actually significant to us of mental qualities, and, as such, is productive of the emotions which such qualities in themselves produce, is proved beyond dispute by the universal language of mankind. We not only speak of forms as majestic or heroic, or gentle or benevolent, or gay or spirited, or melancholy or despondent, &c.; but, what is much more, they are the only terms in which, in infant languages, or among the common people, the human form is described and distinguished. The progress of art, indeed, gives to the artist and the connoisseur the advantage (and with it all the abuses) of technical terms; but in every country, the great body of mankind adhere to their first impressions, and distinguish the individual forms of those around them, by the qualities of mind of which they feel them to be significant. Without pretending to any accurate enumeration, I apprehend the following sources of expression are consistent with every man's experience.

1. From the nature of form itself; in the same manner as has formerly been explained in the case of inanimate forms. Thus, smooth and polished surfaces are expressive to us of fineness, and some kind of animal perfection; slender and attenuated forms, of fineness, gentleness, tenderness, &c.; forms which are described by flowing and waving outlines, of delicacy, ease, and pliability. The opposite appearances in the human form; rough or unpolished surfaces, square or massy substances, sharp or angular outlines; are naturally expressive to us of the contrary qualities of rudeness, coarseness, harshness, and imperfection. That such effects are produced upon our minds by the appearances of the human form, may be very often observed in the opinions we form of the character of strangers, when we have no better grounds of opinion: and, that they have always some effect, even in the impressions we receive from the forms of those we know best, I think every man will at least suspect, who attends to his own feelings.

2. The different forms of age and of sex (for I must limit myself to the great illustrations which nature affords me), are expressive to us, from experience, of different characters, and become thus significant

of those characters. The peculiar forms of infancy are expressive to us of innocence, ignorance, feebleness, thoughtlessness, and vivacity. Those of youth, are expressive to us of sprightliness, activity, hope, and ardour. The mature form of man is expressive of strength, fortitude, thought, and the capacity of exertion. The mature female form is expressive of delicacy, modesty, humility, beneficence, and tenderness: the peculiar forms of old age, in both sexes, of decay, diminished strength, abated capacity, and approaching dissolution. That these different expressions exist in these different forms, it were surely unnecessary to attempt to illustrate.

3. The form is susceptible of another class of expressions, as an animal form. Thus, there are certain appearances which are significant to us of health or disease, of strength or of weakness, of activity or of inactivity, of agility or of unwieldiness, of ease or of constraint, &c. The least attention to our own experience, or to the language of others, may easily convince us, both how generally these expressions occur in our observation of the human form, and how strongly they affect us with the correspondent sentiments either of pleasure or of pain.

4. The greatest and the most important class of expressions, however, of which the appearances of the form of man are significant to us, is that of peculiar characters or dispositions of mind. Of the certainty and universality of this fact, it would be absurd to enter into any formal illustration. We acknowledge it ourselves, whenever we describe any form as majestic, humble, gay, thoughtful, despondent, &c. We understand it, whenever we hear the language of others describe them in the same terms; and we recognize it, whenever, in the works of the painter or the statuary, we feel ourselves affected by emotions of awe, admiration, respect, pity, or sympathy.

Whether the knowledge which all men, in some degree, have of these expressions, is to be ascribed to an original sense, or whether (as is more probable) it is the result of experience, is a question of no consequence in the present inquiry. It is sufficient for me, if it is allowed that the forms of the human body are descriptive of characters of mind; that one form, for instance, is expressive of dignity, another of humility, another of gaiety, another of melancholy, &c.; and that such forms actually convey to us the belief of the dispositions and characters of which we have generally found them significant. If it is allowed that they have such expressions, it will not easily be denied, that such expressions must have their natural and necessary influence upon our feelings and emotions.

I may be permitted however to state, that there are many reasons, both in our own experience, and in our observation of the frame of others, which may lead us very early to some general conclusions of this kind. Every one knows how much the form of man is affected

and changed by the passions which happen to influence him. There is no child who does not know the distinction between the form of dignity, of arrogance, of humility, of supplication, of pity, of melancholy. When we come to think of these varieties, we cannot fail to perceive, that every passion has its distinct influence upon the form and proportions of the general frame; that all the animating and cheerful passions, such as hope, ardour, fortitude, magnanimity, &c., have an effect in dilating and extending the general form; and that all those passions, on the contrary, which are dispiriting or depressing, have a contrary effect, in contracting the limits, and diminishing the proportions, and lessening the volume of the general form. Were observations of this kind carried as far as they deserve, I am persuaded it would be found that every genuine passion has its own peculiar influence upon the form, by its influence upon some peculiar members of it: that certain passions have certain effects, either in the contraction or dilatation of certain parts of the human frame: and that the language of the form might be made as intelligible by the painter or the statuary, as the language of the voice is made by the composer of genius. It belongs to the artist to pursue inquiries of this kind. It is sufficient for me only to observe, that there are certain indications, in the human form, of the dispositions which inhabit it: that different passions produce different conformations of the members and proportions of this form: that habitual dispositions are necessarily accompanied by habitual conformations; and that, from this experience, we all become sensible to these effects, and do in fact judge and speak of the forms of those around us, as expressive of these characters or dispositions.

That it is from these sources, or from the expression of pleasing or interesting qualities or dispositions of mind, that the human form derives all its positive beauty, appears to be evident, from the following considerations.

1. Every form which is felt as expressive of amiable or interesting character, is in some degree or other beautiful. Whenever we speak of a form as being heroic, or majestic, or compassionate, or tender, or gay, or modest, melancholy, &c., we always convey to others, and we mean to convey, the opinion of beauty. Whenever such a description is made to ourselves, we are uniformly impressed with the belief of beauty in that form. In the works of the painter and the statuary, all the forms which represent pleasing or interesting characters of mind, are beautiful; and all those which express painful, or vicious dispositions, are of an opposite character. If our sense of the beauty of form arose from material proportions alone, and were altogether independent of expression, such a coincidence could not happen. Forms would be beautiful only as they approached to a certain material standard; and whatever were the expressions they signified, our sense

of their beauty would be determined, not by this expression, but by their approach to, or deviation from, this standard.

2. The most different forms are beautiful when they are expressive of interesting characters. What can be so different as the forms of infancy, of youth, of manhood, of old age? Yet all are beautiful when they are expressive of the character which belongs to that age. What similarity is there between the forms of hope and of humility, of melancholy and of heroism, of fortitude and of compassion, of joy and gratitude? Yet all of these are beautiful. How different, in every respect almost, are the genuine forms of sex? and yet no one will pretend that beauty is limited to one alone. If our sense of beauty in the human form were the result of material appearances only, such differences of effect would be altogether impossible.

3. The sentiment of beauty which we feel in these cases, is precisely similar to those which we feel from the characters of mind of which such forms are expressive. If the emotion of beauty were the effect of any law of our nature by which certain forms or proportions were immediately productive of this emotion, the emotion itself would be an uniform and homogeneous one, and would differ only in degree, but not in kind. Every sound and colour produces one definite sensation, and all colours and sounds of the same kind, according to their degree, produce the same sensation. If there were any peculiar sense, by which the emotion of beauty, with regard to forms, were received, the emotion would in every case be similar, and as readily distinguishable from all other emotions, as the sense of sound is from that of colour, or the sentiment of justice from that of expedience.

In his experience of the beauty of forms, I apprehend, every man is conscious that there is no such uniformity of emotion, as any sense of material beauty, independent of all expression, would produce. In his admiration of the forms of heroism, of gaiety, of majesty, of pity, of grief, of resignation, is it one uniform and peculiar emotion he feels? or is it, on the contrary, an emotion founded upon the peculiar character he contemplates, and which corresponds to the emotion he feels from the same character of mind, when he meets with it in real life, or when it is represented to him in the page of the historian or the novelist? It would be a singular anomaly in nature, if the same cause should produce in our minds gaiety and sadness, admiration and pity, laughter and tears: yet all these different effects are produced by the appearances of the human form; and, in all these various and contradictory appearances, we at the same time feel the sentiment of beauty. No imaginable theory seems to be able to account for these discordant facts, which rests upon any original sense of beauty in form alone; and no other theory seems to be able to include them, but that which attributes the origin of beauty to the

expressions of which the form is significant, and which therefore admits of every variety of form as beautiful, which is expressive of pleasing or interesting character.

4. In the preceding observations, I have considered the human form only as a simple form, the beauty of which was to be determined either by some law of material form, or as significant to us of various interesting and affecting characters of mind. Fearful as I am of fatiguing my readers, I must yet entreat their patience to follow me in another view of the subject; in which, I apprehend, the same truth will more strongly appear, and from which, perhaps, some conclusions may be derived, of consequence both to the artist and the man of philosophic taste.

The human form is not a simple form. It is a complicated frame, composed of many parts, in which some relation of these parts is required by every eye, and from which relation, beauty, or deformity, is the actual and experienced result. If the principle which I have stated is just, if the positive beauty of the human form arises, in all various and different cases, from its expression of character of mind, then it ought to follow, that the beauty of composition in this complicated form ought (as in all other cases of composition) to arise from the preservation of unity of character; that no forms or proportions ought to be felt as beautiful, but those which accord with this central expression; and that different forms and different proportions ought to be felt as beautiful, whenever they are significant of the characters we wish and expect. If these are found to be facts, I apprehend it will not only be sufficient to show the real origin of the beauty of form, but to establish some more definite conceptions, with regard to the nature of the beauty we experience in these relations of the parts of the human form.

That the beauty of composition in the form of man is determined by this unity of character or expression; or, in other words, that the principle by which we judge of the beauty of any member or members of the form, is that of their correspondence to the general expression, is a proposition which seems very consistent with common experience. Every form which we remark for beauty, has always some specific character which is the foundation of our admiration. It is either manly, or gallant, or majestic, or dignified, &c.; or feminine, or gentle, or modest, or delicate, &c.: as such we feel, and as such we describe it. It seldom happens, however, in actual life, that any form of this kind appears to us in which we are not conscious of some defect, of some limb or member being unsuitable to the rest, and affecting us with some sense of pain or dissatisfaction. If we ask ourselves what is the reason of our disapprobation, or if we attend to the language of others, we shall find, I think, that it is always resolvable into the want of correspondent expression; and that the imaginary attempts we

make to rectify it, consist in new-modelling the faulty members, so as to accord with this expression. It is painful to us, thus, to see a form of general delicacy, with any strong or muscular limb; to see a bust of manliness or strength, with limbs either short or attenuated; or limbs of great strength and vigour, with a thin and hectic form of body, &c. In the general form of woman, it is, in the same manner, painful to observe any limb of masculine size or strength; and, so delicate is even the rudest feeling upon this subject, that the form of a foot, or of a finger, can detract from the most perfect beauty. When we have the misfortune to witness any defect of this kind, we wish, and perhaps we express our wishes, to remedy it; and what is the object of our wishes? Is it not to reduce the too powerful, or to increase the too attenuated limb to the general character of the form; to maintain, throughout it, that unity of expression which is necessary to our complete emotion; and if, either in idea or in imitation, we can succeed in these wishes, do we not feel ourselves, and teach others to feel, the full effect of that beautiful form, which nature or accident has left imperfect? Is it not consistent, in the same manner, with general experience, that, in describing a beautiful form to those who have not seen it, we always begin by stating the character which it signifies; and if we end by asserting that all the various members of the form correspond in maintaining this characteristic expression, do we not succeed in convincing them that the form is beautiful, and that its composition is as perfect as its expression?

The standard, I believe, by which we chiefly estimate the general character of the form, is that of the expression of the countenance. We very seldom, I apprehend, pretend to judge of the beauty of the form of any person, whose countenance we have not yet seen. Of a mutilated statue, of which the head was lost, we might speak securely of the propriety of its mere physical proportions: but I think we should not speak with equal security of the beauty of the composition of its members. In studying any of the greater forms of statuary or painting, I conceive, in the same manner, that we shall feel in ourselves, and that we may observe in others, that our eye is perpetually moving from the countenance to the form; that until we feel distinctly the character which the countenance expresses, we are at a loss to conceive the meaning of the composition; and that when we do feel it, we then immediately conceive that we are in possession of the key by which the form and the proportion of every member is to be estimated. The moment, either in the observation of nature or of the arts of imitation, that we feel the countenance to be expressive of character, we instantly expect, and look for, an unity in the composition of every member of the form. The most insignificant portions of the frame seem then to arise into meaning and consequence; we demand that all of these should contribute, by the nature of their

character, to the general character of the countenance; and if any of them are defective, we lament either over the accidents of nature, or the incapacity of the artist. Were we to state to any person, that a statue had all the proportions which the assiduity of technical taste had ascertained; that every limb was fashioned according to the most approved rule, and the whole composed of the most perfect individual members; the impression, I think, we should leave upon him, would be, that it was a work of consummate art, and that the labour of the artist was deserving of much reward. Were we, on the other hand, to state to him, that this statue had some great or interesting character, that the countenance expressed some heroic or some amiable passion, and that every limb and every line of the form was in full correspondence with this expression, I apprehend we should give him the conviction, that the statue was a masterpiece of genius, and that no language of enthusiasm was superior to its deserts.

In prosecuting this inquiry (and I attempt nothing but to lead the minds of my readers to the prosecution of the subject for themselves), I trust they will find that the second proposition, or, 'that no forms or proportions are actually felt as beautiful, which do not accord with the characteristic expression of the general form,' to be equally consistent with experience. It is undoubtedly natural, at first, to imagine, that a beautiful form is that which consists of beautiful parts, and that, therefore, nothing more is necessary than to unite the most beautiful parts together. Such is the first rude idea of the mind of taste; and such also, perhaps, the first attempt of the young artist. A very little experience is sufficient to overturn this infant theory. It teaches, both in nature and in the imitation of it, that the mere assemblage of beautiful parts is not sufficient to constitute beauty; that some other principle is wanting; and that no proportions are in themselves essentially beautiful, but as they accord with the character of the whole form, and unite with its peculiar expression.

There is no man, however ignorant of the language of taste, who would not feel shocked at seeing the delicate arm of a woman joined to the body of a warrior, or the athletic limbs of the warrior, united with the form of youthful gaiety, or the muscular bust of labour with the light and elastic limbs of joy and activity; each of these parts, however, are beautiful in peculiar circumstances: and why are they here disapproved of,—but because they do not agree with the character of the form, and contradict the expression we are prepared to indulge? Nothing that the genius of man has ever produced, is, perhaps, so beautiful as the limbs of the Belvidere Apollo, and the forms which reign in the head and neck and bust of the Medicean Venus. Yet let us, even in fancy, apply these exquisite forms to any other statue; let us give to the form of Jove or Hercules the limbs of the Apollo, and to those of Juno or of Minerva the head and bust of the Venus, and

we should feel the assemblage not only painful but ludicrous. If we were asked, or if we were to ask ourselves for the reason of this displeasure, we should immediately say, that it was because these forms were discordant with the general character; and that they affected us precisely in the same manner as we are affected in real life, when we see age or dignity counterfeit the manners of youth, or matron gravity assume the affectation of youthful bashfulness. These indeed, are extreme cases; but they are important in showing the principle from which our most common judgments are formed: and whoever will prosecute the inquiry by his own observation, will perceive, that even in his most familiar intercourse with others, it is this demand which chiefly determines them; that in every form which we feel as characteristic, we look for unity in the expression of its parts; and that our criticisms upon the forms of those around us are permanently occasioned by the want of this correspondence, and the contradiction we feel between the expression of the limbs and that of the general form. It is unnecessary for me to say, that such feelings and such criticisms never could take place, if there were any essential beauty in such forms, independent of all expression.

These observations (slight as they are) lead so necessarily to establish the truth of the third proposition, 'that different forms and different proportions of form are felt as beautiful, when they correspond with the character of the general form,' that I can scarcely presume to fatigue my readers with any illustration. If no forms of parts are beautiful but those which accord with the general expression, it must follow, that different forms of these parts may be beautiful. How fully this is the case, we have the testimony of experience. Nothing is more different than both the forms and proportions of the same members, in infancy, in youth, in manhood, and in age; yet in all of these we discover beauty, when they are expressive of the character which is amiable, or respectable, or interesting in these different periods of human life. I forbear to speak of the difference of sexual forms, and of the principle which so obviously determines the difference of our admiration. I leave my readers to attend to the illustrations which painting, and which, above all, statuary can afford them, where they will find that the great masters of this art have governed themselves by principles very different from those who, in later ages, have satisfied themselves with the humble glory of being their admirers and expositors; that the deep effect which they have produced, is by the magical harmony of their composition; that in this study, they have made use of the most different forms, and proportions of form, in every member of the human body; that there are not perhaps two examples existing, in which these proportions are to be found the same; and that, even in the representation of the same ideal being, these proportions are found to vary, whenever the expression, by

which it was distinguished, varied either in kind or degree. I shall only observe, that the principle from which they executed their unrivalled works, is the same which the lowest of us experience in daily life. We are all acquainted with the influences of passion or emotion upon the general form, and upon its different members; and we every day judge of the existence of such emotions or passions by such appearances of the form. Even in the same individual we have seen perhaps all these changes take place: the muscular limbs of health, and the shrunk limbs of disease; the elevated chest of hope or ardour, and the bent form of despondence or grief; the firm and compressed form of fortitude, or the lengthened and elastic spring of gaiety or joy, &c. We have felt the influence of these expressions of mind, therefore, even in the same individual: under different forms and proportions of form, we have recognised, by this experience, the principle which has given to the statuary his power over the feelings of mankind; and whenever we look back upon our experience, we shall find that the forms which we thus felt as most beautiful in the same individual, were permanently those which were expressive of the most amiable or the most interesting dispositions of mind. They who have sufficiently felt the power of theatrical representation, who have attended not only to the voice and the countenance, but to the variety of form, or proportions of form, which Mr. Garrick and Mrs. Siddons assumed, according to the passions they represented, will feel better than by any cold illustration, that different forms are capable of beauty, and that all are beautiful when they express noble passions and interesting emotions.

From the illustrations which I have limited myself to suggest only, but not to pursue, I flatter myself my readers will perceive, that the form of man is actually significant to us of two distinct and important expressions. First, as a physical form, in which the form itself, and every member of it, is expressive either of fitness or unfitness for its physical ends. Secondly, as a form expressive of mind, in which every passion or emotion has its distinct signs, in the appearance of the form itself, and in the appearance of its different members.

The term proportion has unfortunately been promiscuously applied to both expressions; and, in the ambiguity of the term, both the artist and the philosopher have been often misled, in their research into the origin of this beauty.

I am not presumptuous enough to attempt to introduce any new language into a science where technical terms are so rigidly cherished; but I may presume to suggest to my younger readers a very simple rule, by which they may know to what cause they are, in such cases, to ascribe the emotions they feel.

A human form has all the beauty of strict proportion, when nothing hurts us in its form, and when no impropriety appears in any of its

members for the physical ends, for which the form, either in nature or art, is designed.

A human form, on the contrary, has only the beauty of character, when some amiable or interesting disposition of mind is expressed by it, and when we perceive a positive relation between the expression of every different member, and the expression of the general character.

Some attention to this distinction may perhaps be of use both to the man of genuine taste, and to the artist. It may relieve the first from the trammels of technical language, and raise him to higher speculations than the usual schools of art permit or employ; and it may teach the latter, that his ambition is only to be gratified when he can excite the sympathies of mankind, and make the human form expressive of all that the human mind can either exert or feel.

I finish this long section, by stating the general conclusions with regard to the beauty that is peculiar to the form of man, which seem to follow from the considerations I have suggested.

I.—That the beauty or sublimity of the human form, does not arise from any original and essential beauty in this form, or in its composition.

II.—That there is a negative species of beauty necessary to every beautiful form, but not constituting it, which arises from the expression of physical fitness or propriety.

III.—That the real and positive beauty of the form arises from its expression of some amiable or interesting character of mind; and that the degree of this beauty is proportionate to the degree in which this character is interesting or affecting to us. And,

IV.—That the beauty of composition in the human form arises (as in all other cases) from the unity of expression; and that the law by which we determine the beauty of the several members of this form, is that of their correspondence to the peculiar nature of the characteristic expression.

SEC. IV.—OF THE SUBLIMITY AND BEAUTY OF ATTITUDE AND GESTURE.—Besides the general beauty of form which I have considered, there are various emotions of beauty felt from peculiar positions or motions of the human body. The first of these constitutes the beauty of attitude, the second the beauty of gesture.

The proper expression of form is that of the permanent character or disposition of mind. The expressions, on the contrary, of attitude and of gesture, are those of temporary or occasional passion or affection. They have, therefore, the same relation to the expression of the general form, that the variable colours and features of the countenance have to the expression of the general countenance.

I have only further to premise, that proportion, or that proper con-

formation of parts, which is necessary for the purposes of the animal frame, is as essential to the beauty of attitude and gesture, as it is to that of form in general. No form can be beautiful which is disproportioned; but every form that is proportioned is not beautiful. In the same manner, no attitude or gesture can properly be beautiful in a form which is disproportioned or deformed; but every attitude or gesture in a well-proportioned form is not felt as beautiful. Of this beauty, therefore, we must search for other causes.

Whatever may be the result of our investigation, it is to be observed, in the first place, that in this case, as in the foregoing case of form, there are two very distinct expressions, which any attitude or gesture may signify to us.

1. The first is that of ease or constraint, of physical pleasure or physical pain. Our knowledge of this expression is derived from all the sources of our knowledge, from our own experience, from our sympathy with others, and from their language and analogous experience. There is no child, perhaps, who does not immediately perceive, from the attitudes or gestures of others, whether they are easy or constrained; and who does not feel pain when he witnesses any gesture or attitude which seems to him forced or extreme. The same principle guides us in a still greater degree in maturity. And in the fine arts,—in those representations of human form or action where something greater and more perfect than ordinary nature is attempted to be produced, we still feel that ease is necessary to the beauty either of attitude or gesture; and that we are incapable of entering into the full expression of the form, if anything harsh or constrained appears in its composition. Of the truth of this proposition, I shall enter into no further explanation. I have only to add, that while it is an expression necessary to the beauty either of attitude or gesture, it does not constitute this beauty. Many attitudes and gestures may be easy and unconstrained, but they are not therefore beautiful. In every mechanical profession, ease is acquired by the labourers or artists; but the attitudes or gestures which such professions exhibit, are not therefore beautiful. In the common business of life, we everywhere see ease in the performance of it, but we do not everywhere see beauty in gesture or attitude.

The expression, therefore, of ease or facility, is necessary to the beauty of attitude or gesture, in the same manner as that of proportion is to the beauty of form. It is the negative beauty of gesture and attitude, because, without it, this beauty cannot exist; but as it does not of itself constitute it, we must look to other causes for the origin of their positive beauty.

2. The second great expression, of which attitude and gesture in the human form are significant to us, is that of passion, or emotion; or of some pleasing or interesting quality of an intellectual or moral

mind. That such expressions of mind do exist; that in our earliest years we interpret the sentiments of the minds of others, from the external appearances of their gesture or attitude; that, whether an original or acquired language, it is yet a language which all men understand; that, in the defect of artificial language, it is the universal language to which all men instinctively have recourse, and which all men as instinctively comprehend; that the attitudes, in short, of majesty, fortitude, hope, love, pity, despondence, &c.; and that the gestures of gaiety, mirth, rapture, anger, revenge, melancholy, despair, &c.; are intelligible to mankind, without any previous instruction; and that, when they are understood, they convey the peculiar emotions which the affections of mind they signify are fitted to convey,—are propositions so plain, and so universally acknowledged, that I cannot detain my readers by any formal illustration of them.

The object which I have in view, is, to solicit them to observe, that all the positive beauty or sublimity which they experience in such attitudes or gestures, is finally to be ascribed to the character or dispositions of mind of which they are significant.

I.—If there were any gestures or attitudes of the human form which were necessarily and originally beautiful, it would follow, that such gestures or attitudes of beauty might be found under every variety of expression. If, on the contrary, the beauty of these conformations arises from the expressions of mind which they signify, then it ought to follow, that no gestures or attitudes should be beautiful that are not expressive of interesting or amiable affections.

For the determination of this question, the most ignorant man has all the knowledge that is necessary. Every man can distinguish between the attitudes or gestures of amiable or unamiable dispositions; between the attitudes or gestures of gaiety, gentleness, pity, humility, &c., and those of fear, rage, envy, pride, cruelty, &c. Of all these various attitudes and gestures, the human form is susceptible. The only question is, which of these classes of expression is beautiful?—And what the answer to that question is to be, I leave most willingly to my readers to determine.

If this is the case in real life, it is naturally the same in the representation of it. The genius of painting and statuary has imagined and represented all the classes of expression of which the human form is capable. Which of these is it that we feel and that we speak of as beautiful? What are the gestures or attitudes on which our imagination loves to dwell, and which seem to us to give a higher intelligence and meaning to the rude language of common nature? Is it not upon those, which are expressive to us of great, or heroic, or amiable dispositions alone; and do we not wish to forget those, on the other hand, which convey to us the idea of dark, or malignant, or selfish affections? We yield, perhaps, to the powers of the artist: we

acknowledge the use of such forms and such expressions for the general effect of contrast in the composition; but we never mistake between the original and the artificial beauty: and we only lament (as we do in real life), that the forms of vice should be necessary to give effect to the character and the expression of virtue. The artist may speak (in the language of art), of the beauty of such attitudes or gestures, in the same manner as the lover of dramatic art may speak of the beauty of the representation of *Richard* or *Iago*. But these are obviously conventional terms; terms which express, not the beauty of the character represented, but of the justness of the representation; and of which every one has it in his power to judge, when he separates the character from the composition; and considers whether the attitudes or the gestures which express such characters are beautiful in themselves, or only beautiful in reference to the end of the composition.

If any thing more were necessary to be said, upon a principle so obvious, I would entreat my readers to make a simple though an imaginary experiment: to assume to themselves, in the first place, the most perfect form they have known, whether of male or female beauty; and then to throw this same exquisite form into the situations I shall suggest, and which their own experience of the influence of mind upon the material frame will sufficiently justify.

Let them, in the first place, suppose this form under the influence of some very uninteresting or vulgar emotion, such as ever occurs, and must ever occur, in the common business of life, even to the greatest and the best of mankind. In such circumstances, are any attitudes or gestures felt as beautiful? The most perfect form of man may be doomed to low and degrading labour; may follow the plough, or toil at the oar, or labour at the anvil, or be attenuated at the shuttle. The most interesting form of woman may, in the same manner, be employed in the various debasing offices of common servitude, or in the low higgling of the market, or in the angry contests of narrow economy, &c. In such situations, is the attitude or gesture of any form (however naturally beautiful in itself) ever remarked as beautiful? and do we not wish for some higher or more interesting expression, before we expect to find it? 'No man,' says the French proverb, 'is a hero to his valet de chambre.' The truth of the proverb may be extended much further; and there is no man capable of observation, who must not have been often struck with the contradictory emotions he has felt from the appearances of the same form, and the complete absence of beauty in the attitudes and the gestures of the same person, in whom, at other times, and when under the dominion of any interesting emotion, he felt all the influence of the gesture or of the attitude.

Let the experimentalist suppose, in the second place, the assumed

form under the dominion of any unamiable or vicious emotion; let him imagine it under the influence of rage, or envy, or cruelty, or revenge, or remorse, &c.; and then ask himself, whether, in such circumstances, the gestures, or the attitudes of the form are beautiful? Such experiments it may have been the misfortune of some to verify; such attitudes or gestures, all, in some degree, may have seen, in the representations of the painter or the sculptor; and whatever may be the illusion of art, or the artificial beauty which arises from the powers of invention or composition, there is no one who will not acknowledge that, in themselves at least, such gestures or attitudes are not beautiful; and that, if they occurred in real life, they would be felt either as painful or revolting.

Let the observer then, in the last place, suppose his assumed form under the dominion only of amiable or interesting emotions; let him animate it with hope or love, or joy or tenderness, or melancholy or dignity, or patriotism or benevolence, or devotion; and let him then ask himself, what is the character of the attitudes or gestures which the instincts of his imagination supply? He will find (if I do not much deceive myself), that all the attitudes or gestures which then rise before him are beautiful; that every conformation of the human frame which is expressive of such dispositions, is pleasing and delightful to him; and, what is more, that the emotion they produce in him, is precisely the same with that which he feels from the expression of the same dispositions by the artificial communication of language. I have used the simplest illustration that occurs to me; but if my readers are conscious of its justice, it will be sufficient to show them, that the beauty of attitude or gesture arises, not from any original and independent beauty in certain conformations of the members of the human form, but from the expression they convey of the dispositions or passions by which it is animated.

2. In addition to this very obvious consideration, I must observe, that if the beauty of attitude or gesture is predetermined by any law of our constitution, it cannot obviously exist in different and contrary appearances or conformations. If, for instance, the full display of all the muscular force or vigour of the form affords the central beauty of the attitudes or gestures of that form, then no attitude or gesture which hides, which diminishes, or which contracts this display, can possibly be beautiful. If the absolute beauty of the form depends, according to another theory, upon the preservation of certain lines, or proportions, or sinuosities, &c., then it is equally obvious that no form can possibly be beautiful which does not possess these positive lines or curvatures, &c. Whatever may be the hypothesis we assume with regard to the material origin of this beauty, nothing can be more obvious, than that the truth of the hypothesis must finally rest upon the uniformity of our sentiments upon this subject; and that no

hypothesis can be deserving of regard, if it is found that opposite and different appearances are yet productive of the same sentiment of beauty.

The facts, which are within the reach of every person's observation, seem to me to conclude decisively against every hypothesis of this kind; and to show that the most dissimilar and opposite attitudes and gestures are actually felt as beautiful, whenever they are expressive of emotions or dispositions of mind, in which we sympathize and are interested. I limit myself to the suggestion of a very few examples.

In the attitudes of majesty, or dignity, or heroism, or virtuous pride, &c., the form is elevated, the head is raised, the chest expanded, the limbs firmly and vigorously pronounced, &c. In the attitudes, on the contrary, of the same form, under the impression of humility, pity, adoration, penitence, melancholy, &c., the reverse of all these configurations takes place. The head droops, the form bends, the chest contracts, the limbs yield, and the whole frame assumes not only a different, but an opposite appearance. All of these attitudes, however, are beautiful in nature, as well as in the representations of art. Could this happen if there were any certain conformations which alone were beautiful? or can they be explained upon any other principle than that of their being beautiful only, as the signs of the characters and dispositions of mind?

There is great beauty in the same manner in the gestures of all the gay and exhilarating passions, in the frolic of infancy, the elastic step of joy, the expanded arms of hope, the clasped hands of thankfulness, in the reclining head, and heaving bosom, which express the long-drawn sigh of rapture, &c. These, however, are all different appearances, and not reconcileable certainly to the hypothesis of any original or independent conformation, in which the beautiful only consists. But if those different appearances are irreconcileable with such hypothesis, what shall we say to the still more beautiful gestures which even the same form exhibits under the dominion of other emotions? and when the conformations presented are not only different but opposite;—to the slow and heavy step of grief, the drooping form of melancholy, the bent posture of supplication, the reposing limbs of infant slumber, or the prostration of the whole form in ardent devotion, &c.? If we look for the origin of the beauty of these appearances in the qualities of the material form alone, we shall find it difficult to account for the production of the same effect from causes so different and even contradictory: but if we look for it in the expressions of which such appearances are significant, we shall receive a very simple solution, when we consider that all these various signs are expressive of passions which are pleasing or interesting to us, and when we remember, that the nature of the emotion we receive from these signs is precisely the

same in every case, with that which we receive from our sympathy with the passions or emotions of which they are significant.

3. In the slight illustrations which I have now offered, I have for a moment taken it for granted, that our sentiment of the beauty of attitude or gesture is uniform; and that (whatever may be the origin of beauty in this respect) the same gesture or attitude which is once beautiful, is always beautiful. It is an admission, however, very inconsistent with experience; and I have therefore to solicit my readers to observe further, that, not only the most different and opposite gestures or attitudes of the human form are felt as beautiful, but that even the same attitude or gesture is felt sometimes as beautiful, and sometimes as the reverse: and that this difference of our opinion is always to be referred to our sense of the propriety or impropriety of the emotion which it expresses to us.

Every one is sensible of the beauty of the attitudes or gestures of infancy, of the careless play of limbs, and the elastic vigour of motion, which distinguish that happy age. The same attitudes or gestures in manhood or in age would be either indecorous or painful, and would express to us nothing but imbecility or insanity. The helpless attitudes, the slow and feeble gestures of old age, are beautiful in an extreme degree, and can never be imitated by the artist, without producing a deep and interesting emotion. The same attitudes or gestures in youth or in manhood, would be positively painful, as expressing to us nothing but the most abject terror or servility. There are a thousand gestures and attitudes which belong to the female sex, which arise from their peculiar character, and constitution and habits, and which, as expressive of female character, are, and ever must be beautiful. Give the male figure any of these characteristic attitudes or gestures, and you will soon find that the only effect is that of positive disgust and abhorrence. The assumption of the most beautiful or of the most sublime gestures of the male form, by the female sex, is ever productive of similar pain and dissatisfaction.

There is, in the same manner, a certain consistency, that we expect in common life, between the attitude or gesture of any person and the nature of the character we attribute to him; and we never observe any violation of this consistency without pain.

The same attitude of gaiety which we feel as beautiful in the young, we should feel as disgraceful in the mature. The same gesture of joy which we should approve in the thoughtful and the old, we should consider as tame and unfeeling in the young. The grief of a young woman we expect to be expressed by greater violence of gesture, than we should approve in a character of matron firmness: and the calm and subdued gesture of matron grief, would, in the same manner, be painful or unsatisfactory to us in the form of the former. In pursuing this observation it will be found, that not only age, but profession,

occupation, character of form, character of countenance, and a thousand other circumstances, determine our sentiments of the beauty of attitude or gesture, by determining the nature of the expression we expect from the individual we contemplate; and that the same gesture is beautiful or otherwise, precisely as it accords, or does not accord with the character we attribute to the form.

The severe and thoughtful gravity we admire in the attitude of a judge, would be absurd in a young lawyer. The step of dignity, the attitude of command which we love in the general of an army, would be ludicrous in a subaltern officer, &c. The same gestures or attitudes which we feel as beautiful or sublime in tragic imitation upon the stage, would be ludicrous, if they were employed even in the higher comedy; nor would they even be permitted by good taste in the inferior and less interesting characters of tragedy. It is unnecessary to say that the most approved or fascinating gestures of comedy would be altogether insufferable if they were employed in tragic representations. I shall only further request my readers to call to their remembrance the attitudes and gestures which they have so often admired in classic sculpture;—and to ask themselves, whether the same gestures, &c., would be beautiful in all characters (as would necessarily be the case, if beauty in this respect arose from any definite conformations);—whether the gesture of the Apollo would be beautiful in the Hercules, or in the Jupiter; or the attitudes of the Venus beautiful in the forms of Juno or Minerva? Even in the lowest employment of the art of painting, (in portrait-painting), we feel the necessity of this correspondence of attitude to character; and we blame the painter whenever he chooses any attitude or position which appears to us inconsistent with the character of mind which is expressed by the countenance. In feeling and in expressing, on the contrary, this correspondence; in selecting the attitude or gesture which suits best with the character he represents, consists one of the chief evidences of the genius of the artist; and by this means the portrait of an obscure individual may sometimes possess the value of an original composition.

I shall only add to these illustrations, by requesting my readers to observe, in the last place, that in a great variety of cases, our sense of the beauty of the same attitude or gesture in the same individual, is actually determined, not by the appearances which are exhibited to the eye, but by our opinion of the propriety or impropriety of the emotion which it expresses. Indignation, for instance, or rage, or revenge, are passions capable of producing very sublime attitudes and gestures; and when these passions arise from great or noble motives, the attitudes by which they are expressed are felt as sublime. Let us witness the same attitudes when they are expressive of little, or trivial, or degrading sentiments, and they immediately become painful or ridiculous. The gestures of Don Quixote in encountering the wind-

mills, or in routing the flock of sheep, are precisely the same with those that must have been employed by the Amadises or the Orlandos of romance; yet they would be beheld certainly with very different emotions. The attitudes of grief, of sorrow, of melancholy, are beautiful in an extreme degree, particularly in the female form. Tell us, however, that they arise from some trifling cause, from the disappointment of a party, the loss of a trinket, or the success of a rival beauty, and we feel no emotion but those of contempt or ridicule. The gestures of almost all the gay and exhilarating passions are beautiful; and our sympathy with happiness is so great, that we never observe them without the disposition to believe that they are just. Inform us, however, that all these expressions of happiness arise from some childish, or some worthless motive; that the philosopher has only discovered a new butterfly; or that the Warrior has only got a step in the army; that the joy of the youthful beauty is only occasioned by the present of a new dress, and that of the matron by a fifty pound prize in the lottery, &c.; and the gestures we formerly admired become at once either ludicrous or disgusting. Observations of this kind may be extended to every emotion or passion; and I think it will be found, in every case, that no gesture or attitude expressive of such passions or emotions is permanently and originally beautiful; that our opinion of this beauty varies according to circumstances; and that the circumstance, in every case, which determines our sentiment of beauty, is our opinion of the justness or propriety of the emotion which such attitude or such gesture signifies.

SEC. V.—OF GRACE.—The preceding illustrations are intended to show, that the sublimity or beauty of attitude and gesture, arises not from any causes of a material kind, nor from any law by which certain material appearances are immediately productive of these sentiments, but from their being adapted to express, and being felt as expressive of amiable, or interesting, or respectable qualities of the human mind. In concluding those illustrations, I have completed all that I had properly in view in that investigation.

There is, however, a quality of which the human form is susceptible, and which is occasionally found both in its positions and in its motions, which is not sufficiently accounted for by this theory. This quality is grace; a quality different from beauty, though nearly allied to it; which is never observed without affecting us with emotions of peculiar delight, and which it is, perhaps, the first object of the arts of sculpture and of painting to study and to present. Upon this subject, while I presume to offer a few additional observations, I am yet to request my readers to consider them rather as conjectures, than as the results of any formal inquiry.

That there is a difference between the qualities of beauty and of grace, in the human form, must, I conceive, everywhere be admitted. The terms themselves are neither synonymous, nor are used synonymously; the emotions we receive from them are easily distinguishable, and are every day distinguished in common language; and when we refer to experience, we may find a thousand instances in which the positions and movements of the form are beautiful without being graceful. Beauty, indeed, in some degree or other, is to be found in the most common appearances of man; but grace is rarely seen. We often lament its absence, while we are conscious of the presence of beauty; and it everywhere seems to us to demand some higher and more uncommon requisites than those which are necessary to mere beauty.

It seems to me, still further, that the appearances of grace in the attitudes or gestures of the form, are never perceived without affecting us with some sentiment of respect or admiration for the person whose form expresses them. When we observe the attitudes of joy, or hope, or innocent gaiety, we feel delight; but not respect, for those who exhibit them. When we observe the attitudes of grief, or melancholy, or despondence, we feel sympathy, and the delight which nature has annexed to social interest; but we do not necessarily feel admiration. The gestures of rage, in the same manner, of force, of anguish, of terror, may affect us with very sublime emotions of fear, of astonishment, of awful interest; but they may be unaccompanied with any emotion of admiration or respect for the individual who displays them. Whenever, on the contrary, we witness the graceful in gesture or attitude, we feel, I apprehend, an additional sentiment of respect; a conviction of something dignified or exalted in the mind of the person, and of which the gesture or attitude employed is felt as significant to us. How far this proposition is true, must be finally determined by the consciousness of my readers. I shall observe only, that it seems to me very strongly justified both by the language of philosophers, and by the common language of the world. When we hear any attitude or gesture described as graceful, we are conscious, I think, of immediately feeling some sentiment of respect or admiration for the individual who displays it. Whenever we use the same term ourselves, we mean always to convey to those who hear us, a similar sentiment. Every attitude or gesture of a well-proportioned form, which is at once easy and expressive of some amiable or interesting feeling, is beautiful, and is accordingly spoken of as beautiful: but when we add the term graceful, we wish, I think, always to convey the idea of some additional quality, which is entitled to respect, and which is expressive of some conceived dignity or superiority in the mind of the person who exhibits it. Whenever, in the same manner, any attitude or gesture affects us, beside the emotion of beauty, with the sense of respect or

admiration for the individual in whose form it appears, I apprehend we use the term graceful in addition to that of beautiful, to express our sense of this superiority or dignity. The application of the same observation to the sublime, either in movement or position, is within the reach of every person's inquiry; and I apprehend, that the experience of every one will teach him, that the sublime of this kind may often exist without grace; and that, when grace is perceived, it is always felt as an additional quality, and as expressive of something in the character of the person which excites our veneration, or astonishment, or respect.

I.—From these preliminary remarks, I would observe, in the first place, 'That there seems to be no one emotion or class of emotions, to the expression of which the quality of grace is exclusively limited; but that, on the contrary, every emotion in which the spectator can be interested, is susceptible of grace in the expression of it, either in attitude or gesture.' Of so general a proposition, the full illustration is impossible within the limits to which I must confine myself. I shall only request my readers to call to mind, the different pleasing or interesting emotions of which the human form is expressive, and to examine for themselves, whether there is any of them which does not admit of grace in these expressions. If we consult experience, I am much deceived if we shall not find that every class of human feelings is susceptible of grace in the movements or positions of the form which is significant of such qualities. All the gay and exhilarating emotions, the emotions of hope, of joy, of love, of beneficence, of admiration, &c., admit very obviously of grace, as well as of beauty; though it is much more rarely, perhaps, that we discover it. In the saddening or depressing class of emotions, on the other hand—in grief, or sorrow, or penitence, or melancholy, &c., the capacity of grace will, I apprehend, equally be found. If we consult the productions of the fine arts, (and more particularly of the fine arts of antiquity, whose predominant feature is grace), we shall arrive at the same conclusion. In the remains which we possess of their sculpture, there is scarcely any emotion or class of emotions of which man is susceptible which they have not imitated. In all of these, grace is intended, and is produced; and in all the minute or technical commentaries of connoisseurs, there is none which has limited this quality to any one expression, or class of expressions exclusively; or pointed out any appearance of the human form which is susceptible of beauty or sublimity, and which is not susceptible of grace. If the reader will take the trouble of following out these slight suggestions, I apprehend he will be satisfied that grace is not the result of any peculiar quality in the human character, but of some general quality which may be common to all.

II.—I presume to observe in the second place, 'That, wherever the

attitude or gesture expressive of any emotion or passion, is at the same time expressive of self-command, (of that self-possession which includes, in our belief, both the presence of a lofty standard of character and conduct, and of the habitual government of itself by this high principle), the attitude or gesture is perceived and felt as graceful; and that, although every pleasing or virtuous quality of mind may admit of beauty, and every great or exalted quality may admit of sublimity, the sense of grace is only experienced when, in the expression of these qualities, we perceive, still further, the expression of that dignified self-command which restrains them within those limits of refined, or of high-minded propriety which it has prescribed to itself.' Of a proposition of so general a kind, the proof, I am sensible, must finally rest upon the consciousness of those who will take the pains to examine it. I presume only to suggest a few topics of illustration, both from actual nature, and from the imitations of the fine arts, which may facilitate this examination.

I. It will be found, I think, in the first place, that the attitude or gesture of no passion or emotion, however pleasing or interesting, is actually felt as graceful when it is considered as violent, or intemperate, or significant of want of self-command. Nothing, for instance, is more beautiful than the attitudes of hope or joy, or the gestures of mirth and innocent gaiety. We love them in the frolics of infancy, in the sportive activities of youth, in the cheerful 'abandon' of rural dancing, &c. But it is rarely that we find them graceful. In this tumult and intemperance of happiness, there is something rather that always borders upon the ludicrous; and the slightest exaggeration of the gestures is sufficient to make them the objects of our laughter, instead of our admiration.

Nothing, in the same manner, is more lovely than the attitudes or movements of all the kind and benevolent affections, as those of pity, charity, beneficence, modesty, maternal tenderness, &c.; yet how seldom do we, at the same time, remark them as graceful? Their hurry and intemperance, which are often additional sources of their beauty, take away in the same proportion from their grace, and tend to make them degenerate into positions of constraint, or into movements of violence and force.

In the other class of passions, in the severe, the suffering, the dreadful, &c., it will be found, in the same manner, I apprehend, that no attitudes or gestures are ever felt as graceful, which express that violence or intensity of passion, which indicates the absence of all self-command. The attitudes of horror, for instance, of fear, of despair, may be, and are very often sublime; but no one is so absurd as to consider them as graceful. The frantic gestures of rage, of agony, of revenge, &c., may often possess sublimity; but it would be a contradiction in terms to speak of them as possessing grace. I know not

that there is any statue of antiquity in which extreme passion is represented, but in the Laocoon; and undoubtedly the first impression which it makes upon common spectators, is very different from that of grace.

There is another illustration of the same proposition which is within every one's reach, I mean, from the observation of the theatre. In actual life there are many circumstances which prevent the exhibition of grace in the positions or movements of the form; and amid the trivial scenes of common business or amusement, there would be an absurdity in any attempt to display it. But upon the stage, where stronger passions are represented, and more important interests transacted, some attempt, at least, of this kind, is both expected and executed. It is to this illustration that I wish to direct the attention of my readers, and to request them to observe when it is that they are sensible of grace in the attitudes or gestures which are exhibited. If I do not much deceive myself, they will find that no gesture or attitude is ever felt as graceful when it is expressive of violent or intemperate emotion; and that no character admits of grace in representation, which is distinguished either by the extravagance of comic, or the violence of tragic passion.

It is on this account that grace is rarely to be found in the gestures either of infancy or of old age. The frolics of children, the wild playfulness of early youth are beautiful, but they do not amount to grace; or, if they do, it is to a degree only of grace very inferior to that of which the perfect form is susceptible. Their age is yet incapable of any high sentiment of propriety, and of any firm habit of self-command; and their gestures therefore are marked by a freedom and carelessness, which excite delight rather than admiration or respect. In old age, on the other hand, the deficiency of grace arises from a different cause. The progress of years takes but too certainly from the vigour of the human mind, and from the capacity of physical expression; and however beautiful, therefore, or sublime the gestures of age may be, they seldom are expressive of high thought or conscious superiority. It is only in the perfection of the human system; in the age when the form has assumed all its powers, and the mind is awake to the consciousness of all the capacities it possesses, and the lofty obligations they impose, that the reign of physical grace commences; and that the form is capable of expressing, under the dominion of every passion or emotion, the high and habitual superiority which it possesses, either to the allurements of pleasure or the apprehensions of pain. It is this age, accordingly, which the artists of antiquity have uniformly represented, when they sought to display the perfection of grace, and when they succeeded in leaving their compositions as models of this perfection to every succeeding age.

It is from the same cause that grace is so seldom to be found in the

attitudes or gestures of the lower orders of mankind. The usual occupations in which they are engaged are productive of no gestures or attitudes significant of emotion, and all that we look for in them is merely ease, or the absence of constraint. In their hours of sensibility or passion, on the other hand, as their education and the habits of their society seldom give them any high sentiments of propriety or decorum, the gestures which they employ are as seldom distinguished by any temperance or moderation. Their gaiety therefore is apt to be expressed by movements of homeliness and vulgarity; and their sufferings by correspondent movements of violence or extravagance. Whenever we do discover the rudiments of grace among them, we shall always find that they are expressive of some chastened or subdued passion; of some expression which marks the predominance of mind over temporary emotion; and which is significant to us of a character superior to that tumult and hurry which we generally observe in their unstudied and unstrained gestures. That it is on the same account we expect some degree of gracefulness at least, in the higher ranks of life, in those who have possessed a more generous education, and that it is from their habits of accommodating themselves to this expectation that we generally find it, are subjects of illustration too obvious to require any comment.

II.—I would observe, in the second place, that the attitudes or gestures of every passion or emotion are felt as graceful, when they appear as significant of this self-command or self-possession.

In the preceding illustrations I have stated that none of the gestures, or attitudes of the gay or cheerful passions (however beautiful they may be) are felt as graceful when they are violent or intemperate—when, then, are they felt as graceful? or what is the point or degree of emotion, when they rise from simple beauty into grace? If the reader will pursue the investigation, I think he will uniformly find, that it is when they are subdued into temperance, and when they indicate the possession of self-command. The sports of youth, the festivities of peasants, the mirth of rural dancing, &c., admit of pleasing, and sometimes of beautiful gestures, but seldom of attitudes or gestures which are graceful: and they very generally degenerate into movements either ludicrous or grotesque. When is it that we meet, amid such scenes, with grace? It is always, I apprehend, when some individual mingles with the group, whose gestures indicate a character superior to the scene, and in whose movements we read a mind incapable of the intemperance of the common joy. There may be beauty in the representation of the gayest dances of the nymphs of Diana; but the grace of the goddess can only be displayed by movements which are significant of purer taste and more exalted character. In Hogarth's admirable print of 'the ball-room' (intended for the illustration of a very different theory), it is impossible for the most

careless observer not to perceive that even the very imperfect grace which he has given to the two principal figures arises from the composure and temperance of their feelings, compared with the tumult, and affectation, and overstrained efforts of the other dancers. The hasty and hurried gestures of joy, may often be compatible with beauty; but they are felt as graceful only when they are softened down into chastisment and composure. There is a period in the emotion of mirth when it may assume gracefulness; but it is very different from that intemperance where 'laughter is holding both his sides.'

However beautiful, in the same manner, the expressions of all the social or benevolent affections are, it is only when we see them under the control of judgment and of taste, that we feel them as graceful. It is not in the hurried step of compassion, in the wild disorder of maternal anxiety, or in the sudden ardours of generous friendship, that we find attitudes or gestures of grace. It is in the more temperate period of those affections, when we see the dominion of emotion, rather than passion, and when the gestures assume the repose of habitual character. There is not a more exquisite picture of generous affection than that which Virgil has described in the well known exclamation of Nisus,

'Me, me adsum qui feci! in me convertite ferrum,' &c.

Yet the painter would certainly be much mistaken, who should seize this frantic and breathless moment as the moment of grace. There are no affections so susceptible perhaps of graceful attitude or gesture as those which belong to devotion; and they have, from many causes, been the great object of imitation among the painters of modern times. Every one must have observed, however, that it is not in their periods of violence or extremity, amid the transports of hope, or the raptures of joy, or the agonies of penitence, that grace is to be found; that the attitudes which are graceful, are always those, on the other hand, which represent chastened and subdued emotion; and that the painters who are most eminent for the production of grace, are those who have given this chastened character to their forms, and repressed all the expressions of intemperate or unrestrained emotion.

In the opposite class of passions; in those which belong to pain and to suffering, it will be found, in the same manner, that although the extreme violence of the expressions may be sublime, the point or degree of passion which alone is susceptible of grace, is that which evinces a mind unsubdued by affliction, and which continues to possess itself amid all the sufferings which surround it. There is none of these passions, perhaps, which does not admit of the graceful, either in position or in movement; and it is in the expression of some of them that the highest degree of grace is exhibited of which the human

form is capable; yet every one must have perceived that it is never in their state of violence and intemperance that this quality is found, and that the hurry and tumult of the gestures of fear, of pain, of horror, of despair, &c., if they cease to be felt as sublime, tend always to degenerate into the ridiculous or contemptible. Whenever, on the contrary, under such circumstances, we perceive the presence of a high and unconquered mind; whenever, in the composure of the attitudes, or in the tranquillity of the gestures, we see the dominion of lofty thought and exalted sentiment, we feel immediately these gestures and attitudes to be graceful; and as signs of these high qualities of mind, we regard them with the same sentiments of admiration and of respect that we are found to feel for the qualities they signify. Give to the dying Gladiator the attitude of agony or of horror; and, although the expression might be sublime, yet it would lose all the grace which is acknowledged to distinguish it. Give to the Apollo Belvidere any gesture of rage or revenge; and, though its beauty would not be lost, it would lose all the matchless grace which every age has felt, in that expression of divinity which radiates from every limb of its form; in that composure which marks the superiority of a celestial being; and in that lofty scorn which disdains even to feel a victory over an enemy so unworthy of his arms. It is not, in the same manner, in the agonizing limbs, or in the convulsed muscles of the Laocoon, that the secret grace of its composition resides; it is in the majestic air of the head, which has not yielded to suffering, and in the deep serenity of the forehead, which seems to be still superior to all its afflictions, and significant of a mind that cannot be subdued.

'What grace,' says Mr. Smith, with his usual persuasive eloquence, 'what noble propriety do we not feel in the conduct of those who exert that recollection and self-command which constitute the dignity of every passion, and which bring it down to what others can enter into? We are disgusted with that clamorous grief, which, without any delicacy, calls upon our compassion with sighs and tears, and importunate lamentations. But we reverence that reserved, that silent and majestic sorrow, which discovers itself only in the swelling of the eyes, in the quivering of the lips and cheeks, and in the distant, but affecting coldness of the whole behaviour. It imposes the like silence upon us; we regard it with respectful attention, and watch over our whole behaviour, lest, by any impropriety we should disturb that concerted tranquillity, which it requires so great an effort to support.' (Theory of Moral Sentiments.) It is 'this recollection and self-command,' which in such scenes constitute what even in common language is called the graceful in behaviour or deportment; and it is the expression of the same qualities in the attitude and gesture, which constitute, in my apprehension, the grace of such gestures or such attitudes.

As a further illustration of the same truth, I must again hint to my readers the observation of the theatre. Within the limits which I must prescribe to myself, it is impossible for me to enter into any detail upon this pleasing subject. I shall satisfy myself by appealing to this observation, and by stating, that if the hypothesis which I have proposed is just, it ought to be found, that, whether in comic or in tragic passions, the moment of grace should be that of composure and self-command; that every attitude or gesture which is significant of this character of mind should in some degree or other be graceful; that no characters should admit of grace in representation, which are distinguished by violence or intemperance of passion; and that the scenes or movements in the representation of any character, which are most susceptible of graceful representation, should be those in which the dignity of the character is most displayed in superiority to the passions which subdue ordinary men. If the reader should arrive at these conclusions, he will perhaps be led to perceive the cause of the acknowledged superiority of the French to the English stage, in the article of grace; and that the bold delineations of character which distinguish the drama which Shakespeare has formed, can be represented only by the display of an energy and extremity of passion which is incompatible with the temperance of graceful gesture.

In the preceding observations, I have alluded only to the positions and movements of the human form, under the dominion of emotion or passion. It seems to me, however, that the observation may be carried further, and that wherever, in the movements of the form, self-command, or self-possession is expressed, some degree of grace, at least, is always produced. I shall state only two instances of this: the first is in the movements of the form, in cases of difficulty; and the second, of similar movements in cases of danger.

The common motions of walking, running, &c., have in themselves nothing of difficulty, and are therefore, in general, incapable of producing any emotion. But dancing is an art of real difficulty, and we observe it always with the consciousness of this difficulty. To acquire all the different motions which are most commonly taught in this branch of education; to appropriate them to the particular time and character of the music; to understand the figure of every dance, which is purposely made as intricate as the time will permit; and to be able to execute all this with ease and facility, are in truth acquisitions of more difficulty than we generally believe, and require more composure and presence of mind than we are commonly disposed to imagine. When, accordingly, we see all this well performed, when we see the dancer move without hurry or disorder, perform all the steps of the dance with ease, accommodate his motions with justice to the measure, and extricate himself from all the apparent intricacies of the figure, with order and facility, we feel a very perceptible sentiment of surprise

and admiration, and are conscious of the grace of gestures, in which so much skill, and composure, and presence of mind are displayed. If we compare such a performance with the rude gestures of the untaught vulgar, or with the hurried and extravagant postures of those who happen unfortunately to mingle in the dance without the requisite instruction, we shall soon perceive how much the grace of gesture is dependent upon the character of mind which it exhibits; and if we ascend from this common example to the higher exhibitions of the art, to the serious or heroic dances of the opera stage, we shall see this grace expand, from the same cause, into loftier dimensions; and be satisfied, that the applause we hear around us is justly due to every exhibition where dignity of mind is expressed, or where difficult things are performed with ease and facility. I have chosen this instance as the most familiar that occurs to me: but the reader who will prosecute the subject, will find a thousand illustrations of it, in his observation of the gestures of men in every performance which is difficult of execution, and in proportion to this difficulty; and will perceive the influence of this presence or command of mind in bestowing grace, from the boatman at his oar, or the smith at his anvil, to the deportment of the higher ranks in the drawing-room, where presence and ease and elevation of mind, may be expressed in things so trifling as in the movement of a fan, or even in the presentation of a snuff-box.

There is still a higher degree of grace observable in those movements which express this self-possession and serenity of mind, in cases of danger; and wherever the gestures or attitudes are expressive of this serenity, they appear to me always to be felt as graceful. It is thus, I think, very observable in feats of horsemanship, performances upon the tight-rope, &c., when they do not degenerate into tricks of mere agility, or unnatural postures. That they are felt as graceful even by the lowest people, is obvious from their conduct during such performances. They observe them with still apprehension; they shout and exult at their success; and when they speak of them to their companions, they erect their forms, and assume somewhat of the sympathetic dignity they have felt from these expressions of superiority to danger. It is impossible, I think, in the same manner, to observe the easy and careless movements of a mason upon a roof, or of a sailor upon the mast, without some sentiment of this nature. Observations of this kind, every one may pursue; and, that it is from the expression of this strength and serenity of mind that the grace of such attitudes or gestures arises, may easily be inferred, when it is recollected that the same attitudes or gestures upon the ground, or in a place of security, would be altogether unnoticed.

I entreat leave yet further to remark, that the conjecture which I have now stated seems to be supported by the consideration of the

parts of the human form, which are peculiarly expressive of grace, and by the nature of the movement of those parts when they are actually felt as graceful. The parts or members of the form which are peculiarly expressive to us of the temperance or intemperance of passion, are those which are most susceptible of motion, or which are most easily and visibly influenced by the character of mind. It is in these parts or members, accordingly, that grace chiefly, if not solely, resides; in the air and posture of the head, the turn of the neck, the expansion of the chest, the position of the arms, the motion or step of the limbs, the forms of the hair, and the folds of the drapery. That it is in the slow and composed movement alone of those parts, in that measure of motion (if I may use the expression) which indicates self-possession and self-command, that the graceful is to be found, is an observation which every one must have made, and which has been made from the earliest antiquity. Grace, according to the luminous expression of Lord Bacon, consists 'in gracious and decent motion;' and I need not remind my classical readers, that wherever the poets of antiquity have represented graceful attitude or motion, they have always represented it as composed or slow; and that, wherever it has been represented by the sculptors of antiquity, it has been expressed by the same signs of self-command and self-possession. I presume to add only one illustration from Virgil, in which the distinction between beauty and grace in the air and movements of the human form, seems to me to be expressed with his usual delicacy of taste and of imagination.

In the first appearance of Venus to Æneas, she is thus described—

> Cui Mater media sese tulit obvia sylvâ,
> Virginis os habitumque gerens, et Virginis arma
> Spartanæ; vel qualis equos Threissa fatigat
> Harpalice, volucremque fuga prævertitur Eurum:
> Namque humeris de more habilem suspenderat arcum
> Venatrix, dederatque comam diffundere ventis,
> Nuda genu, nodoque sinus collecta fluentis.—Æn. I. 314.

In these lines, Venus appears in all the glow and gaiety of rural beauty:—She bursts upon us, as upon her son, by surprise; her air, her attire, bespeak youth and animation: and her hair floating upon the wind, marks the speed with which she has pursued her woodland game. All this is beautiful and picturesque, but it is not graceful. It is in the moment she disappears, and when she reveals herself by her gesture, that Virgil raises this fine being into the grace that belonged to her.

> Dixit, et avertens rosea cervice refulsit,
> Ambrosiæque comæ divinum vertice odorem

Spiravere; pedes vestis defluxit ad imos,
Et vera incessu patuit Dea.—Æn. I. 402.

In this description every thing is changed and exalted; her form dilates into serener majesty; her locks cease to float upon the wind, and fall in dignity around her head; her robes descend, and assume those ampler folds which mark a more elevated form, and a loftier movement; and, above all, her gait rises from the gay hurry of the Spartan nymph, into the slow and measured step which evinces the conscious dignity of her genuine being.

The influence of this expression may be pursued further; and it may, perhaps, amuse the reader to follow it into many appearances both in the animal world and in inanimate nature. Wherever the powers and facilities of motion are possessed, there the capacity of grace, at least, is possessed along with them; and whenever in such motions grace is actually perceived, I think it will always be found to be in slow, and, if I may use the expression, in restrained or measured motions. The motions of the horse, when wild in the pasture, are beautiful; when urged to his speed, and straining for victory, they may be felt as sublime; but it is chiefly in movements of a different kind that we feel them as graceful, when, in the impatience of the field, or in the curvetting of the manege, he seems to be conscious of all the powers with which he is animated, and yet to restrain them, from some principle of beneficence, or of dignity. Every movement of the stag almost is beautiful, from the fineness of his form, and the ease of his gestures; yet it is not in these or in the heat of the chase that he is graceful: it is when he pauses upon some eminence in the pursuit, when he erects his crested head, and when, looking with disdain upon the enemy who follow, he bounds to the freedom of his hills. It is not, in the same manner, in the rapid speed of the eagle when he darts upon his prey, that we perceive the grace of which his motions are capable. It is when he soars slowly upwards to the sun, or when he wheels with easy and continuous motion in airy circles in the sky.

SEC. VI.—CONCLUSION OF THIS ESSAY—OF THE FINAL CAUSE OF THIS CONSTITUTION OF OUR NATURE.—The illustrations that have been offered in the course of this essay upon the origin of the sublimity and beauty of some of the principal qualities of matter, seem to afford sufficient evidence for the following conclusions.

I.—That each of these qualities is, either from nature, from experience, or from accident, the sign of some quality capable of producing emotion, or the exercise of some moral affection. And,

II.—That when these associations are dissolved, or in other words when the material qualities cease to be significant of the associated

qualities, they cease also to produce the emotions, either of sublimity or beauty.

If these conclusions are admitted, it appears necessarily to follow, that the beauty and sublimity of such objects is to be ascribed not to the material qualities themselves, but to the qualities they signify; and of consequence, that the qualities of matter are not to be considered as sublime or beautiful in themselves, but as being the signs or expressions of such qualities as, by the constitution of our nature, are fitted to produce pleasing or interesting emotion.

The opinion I have now stated coincides, in a great degree, with a doctrine that appears very early to have distinguished the Platonic school; which is to be traced, perhaps, (amid their dark and figurative language), in all the philosophical systems of the East, and which has been maintained in this country, by several writers of eminence, by Lord Shaftesbury, Dr. Hutcheson, Dr. Akenside, and Dr. Spence, but which has nowhere so firmly and so philosophically been maintained, as by Dr. Reid, in his invaluable work 'On the Intellectual Powers of Man.' The doctrine to which I allude is, that matter is not beautiful in itself, but derives its beauty from the expression of mind.

The qualities of mind which are capable of producing emotion are, either its active, or its passive qualities; either its powers and capacities, as beneficence, wisdom, fortitude, invention, fancy, &c.; or its feelings and affections, as love, joy, hope, gratitude, purity, fidelity, innocence, &c. In the observation or belief of the qualities of mind, we are formed, by the original and moral constitution of our nature, to experience various and powerful emotions.

As it is only, however, through the medium of matter, that, in the present condition of our being, the qualities of mind are known to us, the qualities of matter become necessarily expressive to us of all the qualities of mind they signify. They may be the signs, therefore, or expressions of these mental qualities, in the following ways.

I.—As the immediate signs of the powers or capacities of mind. It is thus, that all the works of human art or design, are directly significant to us of the wisdom, the invention, the taste, or the benevolence of the artist; and the works of nature, of the power, the wisdom, and the beneficence of the divine artist.

II.—As the signs of all those affections, or dispositions of mind, which we love, or with which we are formed to sympathize. It is thus that the notes and motions of animals are expressive to us of their happiness and joy; that the tones of the human voice are significant of the various emotions by which it is animated; and that all the affections which we either admire in the human mind, are signified to us by the various appearances of the countenance and form.

These may be called the direct expressions of mind; and the material qualities which signify such powers or affections, produce in

us immediately the peculiar emotions which, by the laws of our nature, the mental qualities are fitted to produce. But besides these, there are other means by which the qualities of matter may be significant to us of the qualities of mind, indirectly, or by means of less universal and less permanent relations.

1. From experience; when peculiar forms or appearances of matter are considered as the means or instruments by which those feelings or affections of mind are produced with which we sympathize, or in which we are interested. It is thus that the productions of art are in so many various ways significant to us of the conveniences, the pleasures, or the happiness they bestow upon human life, and, as the signs of happiness, affect us with the emotion this happiness itself is destined to produce. It is thus also, that the scenes of nature acquire such an accession of beauty, when we consider them as fitted, with such exquisite wisdom, for the habitation of so many classes of sentient being; and when they become thus expressive to us of all the varied happiness they produce, and contain, and conceal.

2. From analogy or resemblance; from that resemblance which has everywhere been felt between the qualities of matter and of mind, and by which the former becomes so powerfully expressive to us of the latter. It is thus, that the colours, the sounds, the forms, and above all, perhaps, the motions of inanimate objects, are so universally felt as resembling peculiar qualities or affections of mind, and, when thus felt, are so productive of the analogous emotion; that the personification of matter is so strongly marked in every period of the history of human thought; and that the poet, while he gives life and animation to every thing around him, is not displaying his own invention, but only obeying one of the most powerful laws which regulate the imagination of man.

3. From association, (in the proper sense of that term); when, by means of education, of fortune, or of accident, material objects are connected with pleasing or interesting qualities of mind; and from this connection become for ever afterwards expressive of them. It is thus that colours, forms, &c., derive their temporary beauty from fashion; that the objects which have been devoted to religion, to patriotism, or to honour, affect us with all the emotions of the qualities of which they become significant; that the beauty of natural scenery is so often exalted by the record of the events it has witnessed; and that in every country, the scenes which have the deepest effect upon the admiration of the people, are those which have become sacred by the memory of ancient virtue, or ancient glory.

4. From individual association; when certain qualities or appearances of matter, are connected with our own private affections or remembrances; and when they give to these material qualities or appearances a character of interest which is solely the result of our own memory and affections.

Of the reality of these expressions I believe no person can doubt; and whoever will attend to the power and extent of their influence, will, I think, soon be persuaded, that they are sufficient to account for all the beauty or sublimity we discover in the qualities of matter.

The conclusion, therefore, in which I wish to rest is, that the beauty and sublimity which is felt in the various appearances of matter, are finally to be ascribed to their expression of mind; or to their being, either directly or indirectly, the signs of those qualities of mind which are fitted, by the constitution of our nature, to affect us with pleasing or interesting emotion.

Yet, before I conclude this long, and, I fear, very tedious essay, there is one view of the subject which I cannot prevail upon myself to withhold. It is the view of the end, or final cause of this constitution of our nature; or of the purpose which is served by this dependence of the beauty or sublimity of the material world, on the higher qualities of which it is made significant. It is perhaps the most striking and the most luminous fact in the history of our intellectual nature, that that principle of curiosity, which is the instinctive spring of all scientific inquiry into the phenomena either of matter or of mind, is never satisfied until it terminates in the discovery, not only of design, but of benevolent design: and the great advantage (in my humble apprehension) which man derives from inquiry into the laws of his own mind, is much less in the addition which it gives to his own power or wisdom, than in the evidence which it affords him of the wisdom with which his constitution is framed, and the magnificent purposes for which it is formed. It is in this conviction, that I submit to my readers the following hints, upon this constitution of our nature with regard to the material world.

1. It is, in a very obvious manner, the means of diffusing happiness (in so far as it depends upon the pleasures of taste) with a very impartial equality among mankind. We are perpetually surrounded with the objects of the material world; they are capable of giving us either pleasure or pain; and it must therefore be according to the law of this relation, that our pain or our pleasure must be determined.—If the beauty or sublimity of the objects of the material world arose from any original and determinate law of our nature, by which certain colours, or sounds, or forms, &c., were necessarily and solely beautiful, then there must of necessity have followed a great disproportion between the happiness of mankind, by the very constitution of their nature. If certain colours (for instance) or forms, or magnitudes, or proportions, &c., in the scenery of nature alone were beautiful, then all men to whom these appearances were unknown, must necessarily have been deprived of all the enjoyment which the scenery of external nature could give. The eye of taste would often have looked in vain for its gratification; one certain form, in

every class of objects, and one prescribed composition in every varied scenery, could alone have afforded this gratification; and all the prodigal variety of nature, which now affords so delightful a subject, either of observation or of reflection, would then have been significant only of partiality or imperfection. If, still further, in the human countenance and form, there were only certain colours, or forms, or proportions, that were essentially beautiful, how imperious a check would have been given, not only to human happiness, but to the most important affections and sensibilities of our nature! The influence of beauty would then have operated, in a thousand cases, in opposition to the principles of duty. Whenever it was wanting in those with whom we were connected, some obstacle, at least, would be imposed to the freedom or the warmth of our regard; and wherever it was present, an irresistible and fatal preference would be given to those in whom it was found. The parent would turn from the children, whose forms nature had neglected, to those on whom she had lavished her external favour; the friend and the husband would feel their gratitude and their affection decrease with every shade, which infirmity, which sorrow, or which age threw over the countenances of those whom once they loved; the regards of general society would fall but too exclusively upon those who were casually in possession of these external advantages; and an aristocracy would be established, even by nature itself, more irresistible, and more independent either of talents or of virtue, than any that the influence of property or of ancestry has ever yet created among mankind.

If the emotions of taste, on the other hand, and all the happiness they give, are produced by the perpetual expression of mind, the accommodation of this system to the happiness of human nature, is not only in itself simple, but may be seen in the simplest instances. Wherever the appearances of the material world are expressive to us of qualities we love or admire; wherever, from our education, our connections, our habits, or our pursuits, its qualities are associated in our minds with affecting or interesting emotion, there the pleasures of beauty or of sublimity are felt, or at least are capable of being felt. Our minds, instead of being governed by the character of external objects, are enabled to bestow upon them a character which does not belong to them; and even with the rudest, or the commonest appearances of nature, to connect feelings of a nobler or a more interesting kind, than any that the mere influences of matter can ever convey. It is hence, that the inhabitant of savage and of barbarous countries clings to the rocks and the deserts in which he was nursed; that, if the pursuit of fortune unhappily forces him into the regions of fertility and cultivation, he sees in them no memorials of early love, or of ancient independence; and that he hastens to return to the rocks and the deserts which spoke to his infant heart, and amid which

he recognises his first affections, and his genuine home. It is hence that, in the countenance of her dying infant, the eye of the mother discovers beauties which she feels not in those who require not her care; and that the bosom of the husband or the friend glows with deeper affection when he marks the advances of age or disease, over those features which first wakened the emotions of friendship or of love. It is hence, in the same manner, that the eye of admiration turns involuntarily from the forms of those who possess only the advantages of physical beauty, to rest upon the humbler forms which are expressive of genius, of knowledge, or of virtue; and that, in the public assemblies of every country, the justice of national taste neglects all the external advantages of youth, of rank, or of grace, to bestow the warmth of its enthusiasm upon the mutilated form of the warrior who has extended its power, or the gray hairs of the statesman who has maintained its liberty.

II.—This dependence of the beauty of matter upon the qualities of which it is significant, is (in a very obvious manner) the great source of the progress and improvement of human art in every department, whether mechanical or liberal. Were there any original and positive beauty in certain forms, or proportions, or combinations of matter, and were it to these alone that the sentiment of beauty was constitutionally restricted, a very obvious barrier would be imposed to the progress of every art that was conversant in material form; and the sense of taste would, of necessity, operate to oppose every new improvement.

As the peculiar forms, or combinations of form, which nature has thus prescribed, could alone be beautiful, the common artist would hardly dare to deviate from them, even when he felt the propriety of it; and whenever any strong motive of usefulness induced him to deviate from them, the spectator would feel that sentiment of dissatisfaction which attends vulgar and unenlightened workmanship. The sense of beauty would thus be opposed to the sense of utility; the rude but beautiful form would become as permanent in the productions of art, as we now see it in those cases where the ideas of sanctity are attached to it; and thus, at once, an additional influence would be given to the rude inventions of antiquity, and an additional obstacle imposed to those progressive inventions, which are so necessarily demanded by the progress of society.

In the fine arts, still more, or in those arts which are directed solely to the production of beauty, this obstacle would seem to be permanent and invincible. As no forms, or combinations of form could, in such a constitution of our nature, be beautiful but those which this law of our nature prescribed, then the period of their discovery must have been the final period of every art of taste. The exertions of the artist must of necessity have been confined to strict imitation; the

demand of the spectator could alone have been satisfied when accuracy and fidelity, in this respect, were attained; and the names of genius, of fancy, or of invention, must either have altogether been unknown, or known only to be contemned.

By the dependence of our sense of beauty, on the other hand, upon the qualities of which material forms are significant, a very different, and a far nobler effect is produced upon the progress of human art. Being thus susceptible of the expressions of fitness, of utility, of invention, of study, or of genius, they are capable of producing all the emotions of admiration, or delight, which such qualities of mind themselves produce; and a field is thus opened to the dignified ambition of the artist, not only unbounded in its extent, but in which, even in the lowest of the mechanical arts, the highest honours of genius or of benevolence may be won. Instead of a few forms which the superstition of early taste had canonized, every variety, and every possible combination of forms, is thus brought within the pale of cultivated taste; the mind of the spectator follows with joy the invention of the artist. Wherever greater usefulness is produced, or greater fitness exhibited, he sees, in the same forms, new beauty awakening. The sensibility of imagination thus follows the progress of genius and of usefulness; and, instead of an obstacle being imposed to the progress of art, a new motive is thus afforded to its improvement, and a new reward provided for the attainment of excellence.

With regard to the fine arts, the influence of this constitution of our nature is still more apparent. Destined as they are to the production of beauty, the field in which they are to labour is not narrowed by the prescriptions of vulgar men, or of vulgar nature; nor are they chained, like the Egyptian artists of old, to the servile accuracy of imitating those forms or compositions of form alone, which some irresistible law has prescribed. The forms, and the scenery of material nature are around them, not to govern, but to awaken their genius; to invite them to investigate the sources of their beauty; and from this investigation to exalt their conceptions to the imagination of forms, and of compositions of form, more pure and more perfect, than any that nature herself ever presents to them. It is in this pursuit that that ideal beauty is at last perceived, which it is the loftiest ambition of the artist to feel and to express; and which, instead of being created by any vulgar rules, or measured by any organic effects, is capable of producing emotions of a more exquisite and profound delight, than nature itself is ever destined to awaken.

III.—It is far more important to observe, that it is by means of this constitution of our nature, that the emotions of taste are blended with moral sentiment; and that one of the greatest pleasures of which we are susceptible, is made finally subservient to moral improvement.

If the beauty of the material world were altogether independent of

expression; if any original law had imperiously prescribed the objects in which the eye and the ear alone could find delight, the pleasures of taste must have been independent of all moral emotion, and the qualities of beauty and sublimity as distinct from moral sensibility as those of number or of figure. The scenery of nature would have produced only an organic pleasure, which would have expired with the moment in which it was felt; and the compositions of the artist, instead of awakening all the enthusiasm of fancy and of feeling, must have been limited to excite only the cold approbation of faithful outline and accurate detail. No secret analogies, no silent expressions, would then have connected enjoyment with improvement; and, in contradiction to every other appearance of human nature, an important source of pleasure would have been bestowed, without any relation to the individual, or the social advancement of the human race.

In the system which is established, on the contrary—in that system which makes matter sublime or beautiful only as it is significant of mind—we perceive the lofty end which is pursued; and that pleasure is here, as in every other case, made instrumental to the moral purposes of our being. While the objects of the material world are made to attract our infant eyes, there are latent ties by which they reach our hearts; and wherever they afford us delight, they are always the signs or expressions of higher qualities, by which our moral sensibilities are called forth. It may not be our fortune, perhaps, to be born amid its nobler scenes: but, wander where we will, trees wave, rivers flow, mountains ascend, clouds darken, or winds animate the face of heaven; and over the whole scenery, the sun sheds the cheerfulness of his morning, the splendour of his noon-day, or the tenderness of his evening light. There is not one of these features of scenery which is not fitted to awaken us to moral emotion; to lead us, when once the key of our imagination is struck, to trains of fascinating and of endless imagery; and, in the indulgence of them, to make our bosoms either glow with conceptions of mental excellence, or melt in tne dreams of moral good. Even upon the man of the most cultivated taste, the scenes of nature have some inexplicable charm; there is not a chord perhaps of the human heart which may not be awakened by their influence; and I believe there is no man of genuine taste, who has not often felt, in the lone majesty of nature, some unseen spirit to dwell, which, in his happier hours, touched, as if with magic hand, all the springs of his moral sensibility, and rekindled in his heart those original conceptions of the moral or intellectual excellence of his nature, which it is the melancholy tendency of the vulgar pursuits of life to diminish, if not altogether to destroy.

In the sublimity of beauty of the works of art, this purpose of nature is yet more evident. If it is from their natural beauty they affect us; from their being expressive of fineness, delicacy, gentleness,

majesty, solemnity, &c., they then awaken corresponding emotions in our bosoms, and give exercise to some of the most virtuous feelings of our nature. If it is from their relative beauty, from their being expressive of invention, genius, taste, or fancy in the artist, they produce effects no less important to our intellectual improvement. They raise us to those high conceptions of the powers and of the attainments of the human mind, which is the foundation of every noble ambition. They extend our views of the capacities of our nature for whatever is great or excellent; and, whatever be the pursuits from which we come, they stimulate us to higher exertions in them, by the prospect of the genius which has been exhibited, and the excellence which has been attained.

But it is chiefly in the beauty of the human countenance and form that the great purpose of nature is most apparent. When we feel these, it is not a mere organic or animal effect we experience. Whatever is lovely or beloved in the character of mind,—whatever in the powers or dispositions of man can awaken admiration or excite sensibility—the loveliness of innocence, the charms of opening genius, the varied tenderness of domestic affection—the dignity of heroic, or the majesty of patriotic virtue; all these are expressed to us in the features of the countenance, or in the positions and movements of the form. While we behold them, we feel not only a feeling of temporary pleasure, but what Lord Kames has profoundly and emphatically called the 'sympathetic emotion of virtue;' we share in some measure in those high dispositions, the expressions of which we contemplate; our own bosoms glow with kindred sensibilities; and we return to life and to its duties, with minds either softened to a wider benevolence, or awakened to a higher tone of morality.

It is thus, by means of the expressions of which it is everywhere significant, that the material universe around us becomes a scene of moral discipline; and that, in the hours when we are most unconscious of it, an influence is perpetually operating, by which our moral feelings are awakened, and our moral sensibility exercised. Whether in the scenery of nature, amid the works and inventions of men, amid the affections of home, or in the intercourse of general society, the material forms which surround us are secretly but incessantly influencing our character and dispositions. And in the hours of the most innocent delight, while we are conscious of nothing but the pleasures we enjoy, the beneficence of Him that made us, is employed in conducting a secret discipline, by which our moral improvement is consulted, and those sentiments and principles are formed, which are afterwards to create not only our own genuine honour, but the happiness of all with whom it is our fortune to be connected.

There is yet, however, a greater expression which the appearances of the material world are fitted to convey, and a more important in-

fluence which, in the design of nature, they are destined to produce upon us; their influence I mean in leading us directly to religious sentiment. Had organic enjoyment been the only object of our formation, it would have been sufficient to establish senses for the reception of these enjoyments. But if the promises of our nature are greater; if it is destined to a nobler conclusion; if it is enabled to look to the Author of Being himself, and to feel its proud relation to Him; then nature, in all its aspects around us, ought only to be felt as signs of His providence, and as conducting us, by the universal language of these signs, to the throne of the Deity.

How much this is the case with every pure and innocent mind, I flatter myself few of my readers will require any illustration. Wherever, in fact, the eye of man opens upon any sublime or any beautiful scene of nature, the first impression is to consider it as designed—as the effect or workmanship of the Author of nature, and as significant of His power, His wisdom, or His goodness: and perhaps it is chiefly for this fine issue, that the heart of man is thus finely touched, that devotion may spring from delight; that the imagination, in the midst of its highest enjoyment may be lead to terminate in the only object in which it finally can repose; and that all the noblest convictions, and confidences of religion, may be acquired in the simple school of nature, and amid the scenes which perpetually surround us. Wherever we observe, accordingly, the workings of the human mind, whether in its rudest or its most improved appearances, we everywhere see this union of devotional sentiment with sensibility to the expressions of natural scenery. It calls forth the hymn of the infant bard, as well as the anthem of the poet of classic times. It prompts the nursery tale of superstition, as well as the demonstration of the school of philosophy. There is no era so barbarous in which man has existed, in which the traces are not to be seen of the alliance which he has felt between earth and heaven; or of the conviction he has acquired of the mind that created nature, by the signs which it exhibits: and amid the wildest, as amid the most genial scenes of an uncultivated world, the rude altar of the savage everywhere marks the emotions that swelled in his bosom when he erected it to the awful or the beneficient deities whose imaginary presence it records. In ages of civilization and refinement, this union of devotional sentiment with sensibility to the beauties of natural scenery, forms one of the most characteristic marks of human improvement, and may be traced in every art which professes to give delight to the imagination. The funeral urn, and the inscription to the dead, present themselves everywhere as the most interesting incidents in the scenes of ornamental nature. In the landscape of the painter, the columns of the temple or the spire of the church rise, amid the ceaseless luxuriance of vegetable life, and, by their contrast, give the mighty moral to the scene,

which we love, even while we dread it; the powers of music have reached only their highest perfection when they have been devoted to the services of religion; and the description of the genuine poet has seldom concluded without some hymn to the Author of the universe, or some warm appeal to the devotional sensibility of mankind.

Even the thoughtless and the dissipated yield unconsciously to this beneficent instinct; and in the pursuit of pleasure, return, without knowing it, to the first and the noblest sentiments of their nature. They leave the society of cities, and all the artificial pleasures, which they feel have occupied, without satiating, their imagination. They hasten into those solitary and those uncultivated scenes, where they seem to breathe a purer air, and to experience some more profound delight. They leave behind them all the arts, and all the labours of man, to meet nature in her primeval magnificence and beauty. Amid the slumber of their usual thoughts, they love to feel themselves awakened to those deep and majestic emotions which give a new and a nobler expansion to their hearts, and, amid the tumult and astonishment of their imagination,

Præsentiorem conspicere Deum Per invias rupes, fera per juga,
Clivosque præruptos, sonantes Inter aquas, nemorumque noctem.

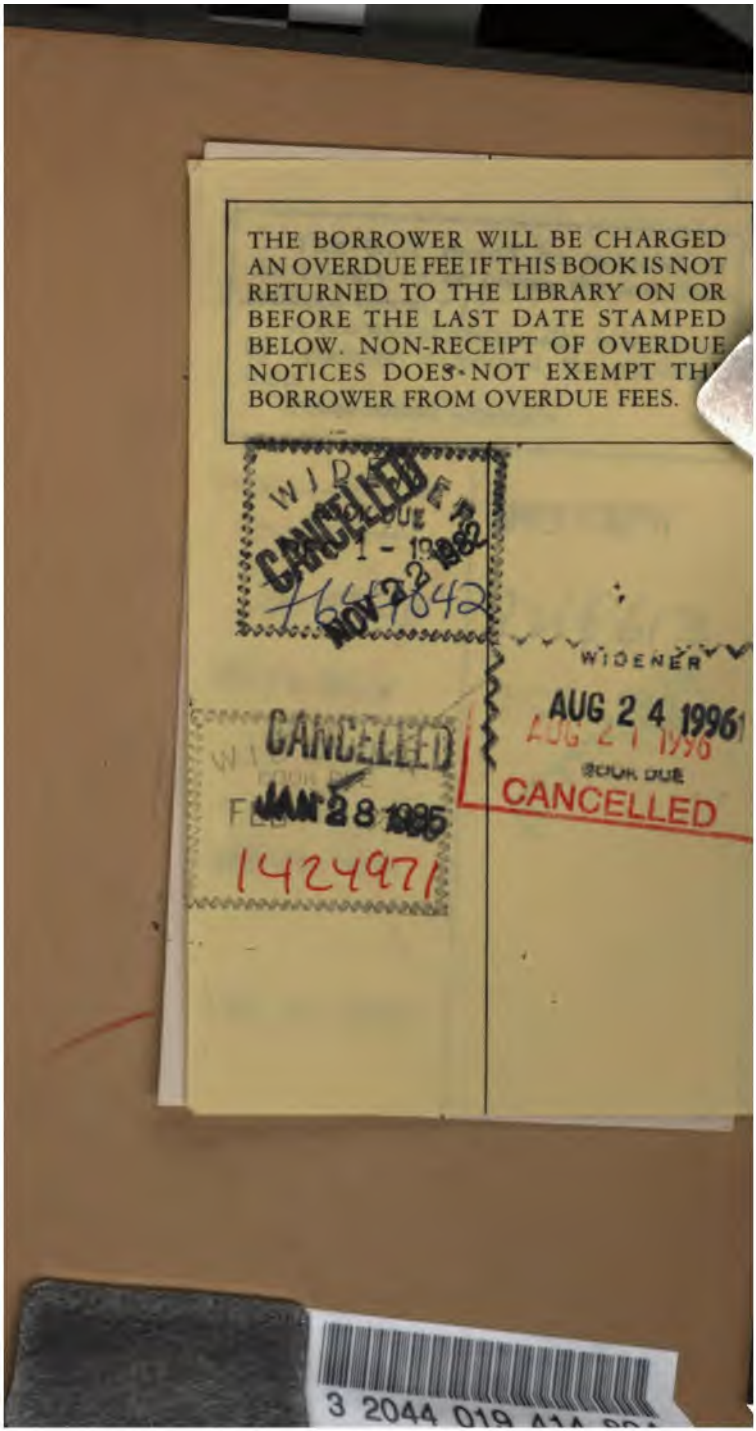
It is on this account that it is of so much consequence in the education of the young, to encourage their instinctive taste for the beauty and sublimity of nature. While it opens to the years of infancy or youth a source of pure, and of permanent enjoyment, it has consequences on the character and happiness of future life, which they are unable to foresee. It is to provide them, amid all the agitations and trials of society, with one gentle and unreproaching friend, whose voice is ever in alliance with goodness and virtue, and which, when once understood, is able both to sooth misfortune, and to reclaim from folly. It is to identify them with the happiness of that nature to which they belong: to give them an interest in every species of being which surrounds them; and, amid the hours of curiosity and delight, to awaken those latent feelings of benevolence and of sympathy, from which all the moral or intellectual greatness of man finally arises. It is to lay the foundation of an early and of a manly piety, amid the magnificent system of material signs in which they reside; to give them the mighty key which can interpret them; and to make them look upon the universe which they inhabit, not as the abode only of human cares, or human joys, but as the temple of the living God, in which praise is due, and where service is to be performed.

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THE END.






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